

SOME MOMENTS WITH THE MASTER

*Spiritual Dialogues with the
Sufi Saint*

Sai Rochaldas Sahib



Edited by
DR R.M. HARI

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Other books by Dr R. M. Hari

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Translated into English
by a devotee

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H. M. DAMODAR

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*Dedicated
with profound humility
and devotion to
The Revered Master
Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah*



Sai Rochaldas Sahib

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INTRODUCTION

Divine beings have come to this earth, from time to time, to enlighten man and guide him in the right direction, to teach him what Divine Love or *Ishq Haqiqi* means and how it can be attained and sustained, and to explain to him the very purpose of life. One such divine being was Sai Rochaldas Sahib, a brilliant star in the galaxy of Sufi saints of Sind. He was unique and his life was an example of perfection. He was a perfect disciple, perfect householder, perfect lover, perfect yogi and perfect Master. Following the spiritual path under the guidance of his perfect satguru, Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib, he realised the Truth and attained to Oneness. He personified divine love—*Ishq Haqiqi*.

As a disciple, he had absolute faith in his satguru, he showed complete obedience to the precept, zeal and earnestness in practice and steadfastness and firmness in endeavour. He was pure in his mind and his spiritual endeavours were without any ulterior motive.

As a householder, he was dutiful, loving, gentle, humble, contented, hospitable, generous, simple, compassionate and fond of beauty, discipline and orderliness. He had fully resigned himself to the will of God. He always wore a simple dress and never put on the garb of a monk or a priest. His dwelling place was very simple. It did not have the semblance of a temple or a shrine.

As a lover, he had attained total absorption (*fanai*) in his satguru, in the deity and in the *gurushabd*, culminating in the annihilation of the self and realisation of the Self or the Truth.

As a yogi, he was adept in pranayama but he never displayed his attainments and powers and refrained from using the occult powers that usually come to a seeker with the practice of pranayama. Going beyond the realm of occult which he treated as an aspect of maya—the cosmic illusion—he delved deep into the domain of spiritualism. He attained union with the Absolute, *Haq* or Brahm.

As a Master, he was a Brahmgyani, fully competent to lead and guide a seeker on the spiritual path and he helped many a seeker.

His life teaches us how one can live as an ordinary person among men even after having attained the supreme divine state—the state of *turiya-atit* or *baqa-ba-Allah*. His life also teaches us that for realising the Self it is not enough for one to merely undertake *japa* or to recite the name of God. One must also adopt the right way of life or conduct. He used to say, “What is the use of a talk if one does not follow the right mode of living or conduct!”

Some of us had the privilege to have spent some time with him. Now when we look back, we realise how blessed were those moments that we had spent in his presence. For many years he had maintained himself in strict silence. It was towards the end of his life that he entered into conversation openly. His utterances were highly significant and of deep meaning. He was very sweet and loving in his speech. His method of guidance was always informal. He did not speak like a scholar, or an erudite or a pundit. Since he had himself practised and realised what he wanted to convey, his utterances were practical and spontaneous and not merely academic. At no stage did he expound an idea through a discourse or a lecture. It is not that he was incapable of doing so. But those who are ever absorbed in the Almighty do not do it; they are not bound by the laws of the mundane world. They act spontaneously under a divine impulse or as the Lord makes them act at a particular moment. He was omniscient; and he spoke in such a manner that the doubts of the seekers were removed without their having raised the doubts openly before him. Fortunately, some dedicated disciples of his took down notes of the dialogues on some occasions.

The Master left his mortal frame in December, 1957. His eldest son and spiritual successor, Dr R.M. Hari, also a man of Self-realisation, decided to publish the teachings of the Master for readers at large. He compiled and edited the available notes of the dialogues and arranged them not chronologically but in accordance with the principal modes of spiritual endeavour, *viz* karma marg (physical endeavour), bhakti marg (endeavour of the mind, *ishq*, *upasana*) and gyan marg (endeavour of the head). He published them in Sindhi in four volumes under the title *Ke Saitoon Sajnan San*. The first volume was published in 1959 and the fourth in 1965.

Since the dialogues have a universal appeal and can help all seekers on the spiritual path and those who are keen to realise God, whatever their religion, caste and creed, it was thought useful to present an English translation of these volumes.

The text in Sindhi did not contain a detailed and systematic account of the

life of Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib, because he was well-known among his disciples and the people from Sind. A brief biographical account has, therefore, been added in this English edition. It is brief because his dialogues represent him better.

The Master never used the words ‘I’ and ‘me’ for himself in conversation but always referred to himself in the third person as *banda*, meaning a human being, a servant or a humble person. He had annihilated his ego to such an extent that the feelings of ‘I’ or ‘me’ did not arise in him. In the Sindhi text, the dialogues have been reported in original and the word *banda* has been recorded. For the convenience of the readers in English, however, the word ‘I’ has been used in this translation in place of the word *banda* actually used by the Master.

On the spiritual path, the life of a seeker is very closely related to the life of his preceptor. In the case of Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib, his life was so intimately related to and intertwined with the life of his preceptor, Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib, that it is not possible to give an account of the life of Doctor Sahib¹ without first acquainting the readers with the life of his preceptor. Therefore, a brief account of the life of Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib is given first in this book. In our narration we shall refer to Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib as the Master and to Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib as the Revered Master.

¹ As he was a qualified physician, the Master was generally known as Doctor Sahib in Sind.

It is earnestly hoped that this edition in English will promote interest in spiritualism and help the seekers in their pursuits for the realisation of the Truth. May the blessings of the Master and of the Lord help everybody!

Hari Om

H.M. DAMODAR

SUFI QALANDAR HAZRAT SAI QUTAB ALI SHAH

A Brief Life Sketch

Sind has been a cradle of Sufism. Sufism is not a cult, or a sect, or a religion, or a school of thought followed by a select few; it is the spirit and the way of life that has influenced the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Sindhi literature has been, until a few decades ago, exclusively Sufistic in content. The folklore and the folk music, too, are predominantly Sufistic in character. The galaxies of the Sufi saints in Sind include such brilliant stars as Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, Shah Abdul Karim, Shah Inayat, Shah Abdul Latif, Sachal Sarmast, Bedil, Bekas, Swami Sahib, Sai Dalpatrai, Bhai Keshavram, Sai Fateh-ul-Din, Sai Qutab Ali Shah, Sadiq Fakir, to name only a few. There were some families of the Sufi saints who maintained very high Sufistic traditions and gave birth to spiritual giants in each generation.

One such family in Sind was the Jahaniyan family which belonged to the direct lineage of the famous Sufi saint of the fourteenth century, Syed Jalaludin Bukhari, popularly known as Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan, meaning the Lord of the mortals. Mukhdum-i-Jahaniyan himself belonged to the eighteenth generation after Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law and spiritual successor to Prophet Mohammed. Thus the Jahaniyan family had direct ancestral links with Prophet Mohammed. One Jahaniyan family had settled in Tando Jahaniyan, a habitation about a mile from the city of Hyderabad in Sind.

Into this family was born a great Sufi saint, Shah Fateh-ul-Din. Shah Fateh-ul-Din had very strong spiritual inclinations from his early years. Assigning the care of the family to his twin brother, Shah Mohammed Shah, he went into the hills where he undertook very hard spiritual practices. He did not intend to marry, but while he was engaged in spiritual practices he got a divine hint that a jewel among the saints would be born to him. A divine soul said to him, "Get married, or I shall burst out of your back." Some of his associates also got divine hints to persuade Shah Fateh-ul-Din to marry. So he returned home from the hills and married. On 21st Ramzan in 1229 A.H. (1810 A.D.), he got a divine son, whom he named Qutab Ali Shah.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah was an unusual person from early childhood. Only a few instances can be quoted in a brief life sketch here. When he was only thirteen, he realised that whereas his father had gone into the hills for spiritual practice before attaining that age, he himself had done nothing so far. Feeling

ashamed of himself, he all of a sudden left his home and went into the hills. There he spent years in spiritual pursuit. People came to Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah to tell him that his son had gone insane. But he paid no attention to them. He told them that his son was following in the footsteps of his elders. When Sai Qutab Ali Shah returned home, his father was very pleased with him and complimented him on the way he had acted.



Sufi Qalandar Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah

Sai Qutab Ali Shah accepted his father, Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah, as his preceptor (*murshid*) and had profound regard and devotion for him.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah did not like staying at home and once again went into the hills. But his father called him back after some time. Though he was not willing to return home, he could not disobey his father. His father got him married. But Sai Qutab Ali Shah did not stay at home even after his marriage

and once again he went into the hills for spiritual pursuits. He felt that marriage was a chain round him and, therefore, prayed to God for relief from that bondage. Soon he got a call from his father to return home. When he came back, he saw that his wife was seriously ill. Soon she expired. After her death, he went into the hills and engaged himself in very severe spiritual practices.

Whenever Sai Qutab Ali Shah left his home, he did not take food outside, even for years. He lived on wild berries. Caves and trees served him as shelters. He generally moved from one hill to another. Wild and ferocious animals would come and sit as tamed animals before him. A pair of lions used to come to him everyday, bow to him, sit for a while and go away.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah was very fond of devotional singing. He used to go into ecstasy with devotional songs. One day while he was on a hill, a boy who was grazing goats in the jungle, passed by him, singing loudly a devotional song. Sai Qutab Ali Shah called him and asked him to sing some devotional songs for him. The boy told him that if he stayed there even for a short while, his goats would go astray and wolves would eat them up. Sai Qutab Ali Shah told him that nothing of that sort would happen to the goats and asked him to sing. The boy consented and became so much absorbed in singing that he sang till sunset. When he got up and looked around for the goats, he could not find any. He ran towards his home searching for them. On reaching home, he was surprised to find that the goats had returned safely to their enclosure. Henceforward, the boy came to Sai Qutab Ali Shah every day and sang devotional songs. In the evening, he used to find the goats safely back into the enclosure.

One day while searching for water on a hill, Sai Qutab Ali Shah got into a well to quench his thirst. Having gone down, he sat there. He had only a piece of cloth around his loins. In the evening, a group of village women came to the well to draw water. Seeing a man in the well, they got frightened and went back to their homes without taking water and told their men that a mad man was inside the well. The men came with sticks and pulled Sai Qutab Ali Shah out of the well and took him to the village. Sai Qutab Ali Shah did not utter even a word. The village folk thought him to be a mad man, but one person whose name was Chandanmal was, however, very impressed with him and he brought him to his house. He offered him a room for his stay. When Chandanmal got up around midnight, he saw light in Sai Qutab Ali Shah's room. He went into the room to find out where the light was coming from.

But as he entered the room he saw no light. When he came out he again saw light in the room. This sequence was repeated several times. He then realised that light was radiating from the body of Sai Qutab Ali Shah and it disappeared the moment he came near him. In the morning Chandanmal prostrated himself at the feet of Sai Qutab Ali Shah and requested him to bless him with a son, for he had none. Later, he got five sons.

Once, while returning from the hills as he was passing through a village, Sai Qutab Ali Shah heard someone singing in a very sweet tone the famous lyric of Sufi saint Shah Abdul Latif:

Unconscious I was,
Love woke me up.

Attracted by the song, Sai Qutab Ali Shah went near and saw a Hindu minstrel singing. Sai Qutab Ali Shah was so much excited at it that spontaneously his emotions burst forth in the form of a song which he sang to the minstrel. The strain of the song was:

A Hindu has prevailed upon me,
robbing me of my mind.

No sooner had Sai Qutab Ali Shah finished singing than the minstrel, whose name was Jetha, sprang up shouting “fire! fire!” He threw off his clothes. There was commotion among the people. Jetha started chasing Sai Qutab Ali Shah. Eventually, when Sai Qutab Ali Shah put his hand on Jetha’s head, he cooled down. But Jetha would not leave Sai and continued to follow him. When they reached Kotri, a town few miles from Hyderabad, Sai Qutab Ali Shah asked him to stay behind.

Later, when someone asked Sai Qutab Ali Shah if he had the impulse of *ishq majazi* (attraction or love for a physical body or attribute) at any time, he referred to this instance and said, “My murshid has always maintained me in *Ishq Haqiqi*; it was only once in life that I had the feeling of *ishq majazi*, but that, too, was transformed into *Ishq Haqiqi*” The impulse of *ishq majazi* had arisen in him very temporarily like a flash of lightning in the clouds that is there for a moment but soon disappears.

When he returned home, his father Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah said to him, “Just as you arose like a jewel out of me, some jewels must also arise out of you. You must marry.” Sai Qutab Ali Shah married again at the age of forty

and had seven sons, of whom only two survived, and both of them grew into great saints.

Once Sai Qutab Ali Shah went into the hills with a group of seventeen devotees. There, they had very good time in spiritual practices. One morning, while Sai Qutab Ali Shah was washing his face and a devotee was serving him with water, a scorpion came out of a hole in the soil. The devotee placed the water-pot on the scorpion to kill it. When the devotee lifted the pot, he saw a tiny shining object in the mutilated body of the scorpion. He took out that object, washed it with water and gave it to Sai Qutab Ali Shah. Sai looked at it and gave it to a disciple whose name was Abhichand. Abhichand put the object in his pocket. He had a few coins in his pocket. Later, when Abhichand took out the coins, he was astonished to see that the coins had become pieces of gold. And behold! he had a *paras mani* (philosopher's stone) in his pocket. He showed to Sai Qutab Ali Shah the *paras mani* and the gold coins. Sai asked him to keep them with him carefully. After a few days, they started on their return journey. They had to cross the Indus River by a boat. On the boat, it occurred to Sai Qutab Ali Shah that the *paras mani* had come to him as a test by the will of his preceptor. He took it from Abhichand and threw it into the river. The disciples started shouting. Sai said to them, "This is not the true wealth. We must keep only that which goes with us and benefits us." When they reached Hyderabad, the devotees complained to Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah about what Sai Qutab Ali Shah had done with *paras mani*. Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah called Sai Qutab Ali Shah and asked him what he had done. He replied humbly, "Sir, had I forsaken the real and brought the unreal, you would have been annoyed with me. I left the unreal and brought the real, and these people are annoyed. Their displeasure is of no consequence to me, but yours would be catastrophic." Expressing his pleasure, Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah said, "You will be a jewel and the multitude will be benefited by you."

During his stay in the hills, Sai Qutab Ali Shah used to come down occasionally to the temple of Hinglaj Devi at the foothill. Many competent yogis used to live there. It was their practice to put a newcomer to a test. Sai Qutab Ali Shah was given the test and he passed it. He was then welcomed by the yogis. He served the yogis very well and they treated him with immense love.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah spent forty years in the hills. Then he settled down at Tando Jahaniyan near Hyderabad.

After the passing away of Sai Fateh-ul-Din Shah, Sai Qutab Ali Shah succeeded him to the spiritual seat.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah had totally resigned himself to the will of the Lord. On a number of occasions the *Mirs* (nawabs, rulers) of Sind had offered him land for his maintenance. But he always declined the offer, saying, “If God gives us bread everyday before the sunrise, why should we seek dependence on these men?” He did not keep any money with him. Whenever he got anything, he used it that very day. He did not accumulate anything with him. In those days, water had to be brought from a long distance with considerable effort, and yet the water pots at his abode were emptied every night. He used to say, “Let tomorrow take care of itself.” At times he used to get messages from his house that there was nothing to eat. On such occasions, he used to say, “Let us thank God. Today we have the honour of being his guests.”

Sai Qutab Ali Shah was a perfect Master (*poorn satguru, kamil murshid*) and could guide, help and lead his disciples on the spiritual path. He was fully competent to bestow grace upon the disciples. His disciples got his help even after he had left his mortal frame. Instances in this regard are given in this book.

The Revered Master¹ loved solitude and anonymity and did not allow congregations or mobs to gather around him. There used to be very few people in his presence; he did not encourage any mundane activity or talk before him. Generally everybody sat in silent meditation, or if a singer happened to be present, devotional singing used to go on for hours together.

¹ Sai Qutab Ali Shah is referred to as the Revered Master in this book.

The Revered Master was highly selective in choosing a disciple and in giving initiation, and had very few disciples. Yet he allowed his disciples to test him before initiation. Once a brilliant Hindu youth, Jiwatram Matai went to him in search of a preceptor. Though Jiwatram was attracted and impressed by the Revered Master, yet he wanted to test him before making a request for initiation. Jiwatram was a very good singer. When he arrived in the presence of the Revered Master, someone was already singing. It occurred to Jiwatram that he would accept the Revered Master as a true saint if he asked him, too, to sing. When the person who was singing had finished singing, the Revered Master asked Jiwatram to sing. Jiwatram got excited,

yet, he was not fully satisfied and desired to test the Revered Master further. Presently, someone brought some cotton cloth for sale. Jiwatram desired to pay for the cloth provided the Revered Master read his mind and asked him to make the payment. Being omniscient, the Revered Master understood what was going on in the mind of Jiwatram and he asked him to pay for the cloth. Jiwatram then requested for initiation and the Revered Master accepted him as his disciple. Jiwatram became one of his highly devoted disciples and he spent his entire life in service and spiritual pursuits. He became a saint of a high order.

The Revered master was not bound by the barriers of caste, creed and religion. He believed that *Ishq Haqiqi* (Divine Love) transcends all these barriers. He was very fond of listening to Hindu scriptures, specially Srimad Bhagwad Gita, Japa ji and Sukhmani Sahib. Bhai Ratanmal, a local resident, used to come to him frequently to read these books to him.

Someone once asked him, “Sir, are you a Shiah or a Sunni?” He replied, “I am somewhere in between.”

There lived in Hyderabad city at that time, some other Sufi saints of very high order, namely, Bhai Keshavram¹ and Bhai Gobindram Sahib (of Manjhadan). The Revered Master had very warm relationship with these saints. They usually exchanged visits. These used to be spiritual gatherings of a very high order.

¹ He was spiritual successor to the famous Sufi saint of the Sind. Sai Dalpatrai Sahib.

The devotees of the Revered Master included both Hindus and Muslims. He respected their traditions. For the convenience of the Hindu devotees who used to come and stay with him, there were separate arrangements for board and lodging. Some of his Hindu disciples, notably Bhai Gobindram Sahib, Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib and Dewan Jiwatram Matai, became saints of a very high order.

Once in Hyderabad, two Hindu young men decided to embrace Islam. Their friends tried hard to dissuade them, but it was in vain. Eventually, they approached the Revered Master to intervene and persuade the young men not to change their religion. The Revered Master called the two young men and said to them, “There is a divine purpose in what the Lord does. If he has granted you birth in Hindu religion, your welfare lies in it. Had he wished

otherwise, he could have granted you birth in a Muslim family, but he did not. If you act contrary to the Divine Will, it will be an act of disobedience to Him. So, you must remain firm in your religion.” The young men felt sorry and promised to abide by his advice.

The Revered Master did not encourage his devotees to lead a comfortable life. He advised them to take very simple meals. When a devotee came to stay at his place, he offered him a straw mat to sleep on and a brick as a pillow.

Both rich and poor people came to the Revered Master for blessings. He attended to the rich people very promptly but made the poor to wait. Once a disciple asked him why he attended to the rich people first. The Revered Master said, “I wish the rich people to stay before me as little as possible and the poor people as long as possible.”

The Revered Master always had his face covered with a piece of cloth while he sat for meditation, to ensure that he did not see anybody. When he was very old, he needed someone to help him to rise. Once when a devotee helped him to rise, the Revered Master asked him who he was. The devotee replied, “Sir, I am Jiwatram.” The Revered Master then said, “I was afraid if it was a rich man’s hand that helped me.”

The Revered Master firmly believed that only Allah is real and that the manifest experiential universe is an illusion. He composed many lyrics which express his experiences and attainments and also reveal his faith in absolute monism, or, in other words, in *advaitvad*. Through his hard endeavours he had attained to the state of oneness—the non-dual—which in Sufistic terminology is the state of *baqa-ba-Allah*, and according to Vedanta the state of *turiya-atit* or the state of *videhamukta*.

Once a Mir¹ came to the Revered Master. The Mir had a sword hanging by his side. The Revered Master asked him, “What do you do with the sword?” The Mir said, “I strike with it and it cuts one into two.” “I, too, have a sword; when I strike it at two, it merges them into one²,” said the Revered Master.

1 A member of the royal family in Sind

2 Duality into oneness

As a moth is attracted by light, so the Revered Master was attracted to the flame of divine love—*Ishq Ilahi*. He could not but burn himself in it. He felt such strong burning sensation within that he used to ask the devotees to pour

cold water over him even in a severe winter. Then he would sing songs of love, of burning in love. He composed several lyrics expressing his state and experiences in divine love. One day someone asked him, “Sir, when do you get the vision of God?” “Ask a fish when it drinks water,” replied the Revered Master.

Devotional music for hours at a stretch continued in his presence. He loved devotional singing very much and would often go into ecstasy with that. When he was pleased he would say to the singer, “You have infused breath in a dead body.” Even in late nineties he would swing his body with the rhythm of the music.

The Revered Master believed that Self-realisation is the goal of life and anything other than love of God is in vain. He used to say that one must arise and awake in the Absolute that the ego must be annihilated and the goal cannot be attained unless one surrenders one’s head.

The Revered Master insisted that a seeker must sleep as little as possible. He composed a number of lyrics stressing the importance of sleeplessness. He believed that a seeker who is given to sleep cannot progress spiritually. Once a disciple asked him why he did not feel fatigue as he slept hardly for an hour or two in a day. The Revered Master said, “If I spend a moment with the Lord, I feel so much bliss that my fatigue disappears and I feel fresh in my body.”

The Revered Master had unbounded love and devotion for his satguru. He had immense faith in him and gave credit to him for everything. He composed a number of lyrics in praise of his satguru.

The lyrics composed by the Revered Master are in Sindhi, Hindi and Saraiki (a local dialect in Sind). He has made frequent use of Persian and Sanskrit words in these poems and valued pranayama (*dam ki mehanat*) immensely and composed some lyrics on pranayama explaining, inter alia, the importance of the different lotuses¹. He used the pen name ‘Qutab’ in his lyrics. Some of his lyrics have been translated and included at different places in the text. A few more lyrics are translated and given here.

¹ *Chakra*; centres corresponding to plexuses according to the Tantric system

My *satguru* is kind,
And seated in my eyes.
My *satguru* has revealed himself,
And the veil is lifted.
Sufferings of Qutab disappeared,
As he met the gracious *murshid*.

II

My *satguru* bestowed on me supreme *bhakti*,
I am ever absorbed in him.
For *gurushabd*, my greatest treasure,
Deeply indebted I am to *satguru*.
He granted light to me,
And taught me to raise breath from the navel,
And to open the lotus at my throat,
And to rise and rest at *trikuti*.
He taught me silence,
And fixation of the gaze,
He taught me pause for the breath,
And its transcendence to *akash*.
I was fixed undisturbed in quiescence,
Qutab hails the *satguru*,
I am truly his slave,
Who taught me all these secrets.

III

They are ever awake,
Who have the grace of *satguru*,
Never separated from Beloved,
They are ever with *Haq*.

IV

Those who are stirred with love,
The *swamis* are awake,
Their mind is fixed on God,

They are the most fortunate.
They are always awake, O Qutab,
Who are immersed in God.

V

He who is awake at midnight,
And remembers God,
He remains ever in bliss,
And is free from sin.
He who is ever busy with *gurushabd*,
And is engaged in meditation,
He is ever happy, O Qutab,
And is united with God.

VI

*Nangas*¹ took the path of annihilation,
And attained to nought.
They understood Being through non-being
And were truly wise.
They realised the Truth, O Qutab,
Who understood Being through non-being.

VII

Peep within,
To be a yogi.
Find Him there,
For whom you renounced.
Truly know your self, O Qutab,
Your Lord stays within you.

¹ those who are unattached to anything in the universe

The Revered Master disapproved vanity in a seeker. He did not like a

seeker walking with his head raised and chest stretched out. He said that such a posture was not befitting a *suhagin*¹. Once a seeker asked him what food God took. The Revered Master replied, “God eats vanity.”

1 A woman living with a husband. It is a metaphor and refers to a seeker devoted to his satguru.

The Revered Master remained so much absorbed in meditation that he was unaware whether it was day or night. Once while he was sitting in a room, there was a knock at the door. He asked who there was. A reply came, “Sir, I am your son Sabit Ali.” The Revered Master asked a disciple, “Do I have a son called Sabit Ali?” He used to remain in meditation for days or weeks at a stretch. When he sat in meditation, he had his head resting on a wooden angle (*bairagin*)². Once sparrows built a nest on his shoulder. They laid eggs there but the Revered Master remained unaware of it and was not disturbed in his meditation.

2 This may be seen in the Revered Master’s hand in the picture facing page 4.

One night the Revered Master was reciting a lyric. A disciple noted it down. In the morning, the disciple said to him, “Sir, the lyric recited by you last night was incomplete. The concluding stanza has yet to be added. Will you kindly do that now?” The Revered Master said, “I do not know what I had said then. I was not conscious of myself. Someone was making me speak. When I come to that state again, I shall complete the lyric.”

At the age of ninety nine, the Revered Master left his mortal frame on 16 Zawahljai in 1328 A.H. corresponding to 22 December 1910 A.D. at Tando Jahaniyan near Hyderabad (Sind). The body was respectfully buried there. The tomb that was subsequently built there is known as Dargah Sahib Sai Qutab Ali Shah.

Sages like Sai Qutab Shah, who have attained to the highest spiritual state, are immortal. In the year 1932, twenty two years after the Revered Master had left his mortal frame, Sai Rochaldas went on a pilgrimage to Kedar Nath. There Lord Vishnu appeared before Sai Rochaldas and asked him for his head. As Sai Rochaldas was about to cut off his head to surrender to the Lord,

the Revered Master appeared there and besought the Lord to spare Sai Rochaldas as he had yet more work to do on the earth. It shows how a perfect Master looks after his disciples even after leaving his mortal frame.

Sai Qutab Ali Shah was succeeded to the spiritual seat by his eldest son Sai Roshan Ali Shah. Sai Roshan Ali Shah, too, was a saint of a very high order. He left his mortal frame on 23 Ramzan in 1350 A.H. corresponding to 1932 A.D.

Sai Roshan Ali Shah was succeeded to the spiritual seat by his eldest son Sai Hadi Baksh. He, too, was a saint of a very high order. Sai Hadi Baksh and Sai Rochaldas were of almost the same age. They had an intimate bond of love between them. Some anecdotes about their relationship appear in the various meetings in this book.

Sai Hadi Baksh left his mortal frame on 3 Safar in 1360 A.H. corresponding to 18 February 1942. He was succeeded by Sai Nur Hussain Shah who is the present *Sajjadah Nashin* at the Dargah Sahib and lives there.

LIFE OF SAI ROCHALDAS SAHIB

The town of Rohri in Sind has the pride of place being the birthplace of a number of saints and fakirs. Among them was the supreme saint Sai Rochaldas Sahib who was born there on 6 January, 1879. His father, Shri Sujan Singh Mansharamani, was a clerk in the Engineering Department and he had a very honest and simple life. Money had no attraction for him. He had four sons and three daughters and had thus a large family to look after. Nevertheless, his was a very peaceful life. His wife was a woman of many virtues. She had spiritual propensities and was always contented. Despite financial constraints, she managed the household so deftly that none in the family was unhappy. Though she hailed from a well off family, yet she had gladly accepted poverty and simplicity. She used to tell her children, "There is nothing wrong with poverty; he who is hungry remains happy." Her words proved to be true with the passage of time. All the children grew to be persons of great merit and virtues.

Sai Rochaldas Sahib was the youngest among the brothers. He was still a small child when his father passed away. Even in his early years, he was taken by his father to the river bank and taught meditation. At the time of Sujan Singh's passing away, the family was in dire straits. Showing consideration for the honest and excellent service rendered by Shri Sujan Singh, the Government appointed his eldest son, Metharam, who was then just sixteen years old, as a clerk in the same department. The period of difficulties, however, did not last long. Metharam, by dint of his honest and diligent work, rose in his position very quickly and soon became the Chief Officer of Rohri Municipality. His younger brother, Tarachand, joined a group of contractors at a very young age. Fortune smiled on him, too, and in a few years he became a millionaire.

Metharam had accepted Sai Vasanram Sahib, a well-known saint in Rohri, as his preceptor. Sai Vasanram Sahib had a special consideration for Shri Sujan Singh's family and Sai Rochaldas came under the influence of the saint at a very early age. Even as a boy of about eight or nine years, he used to spend nights doing service and listening to devotional songs at the ashram of

Sai Vasanram Sahib. Sai Vasanram Sahib loved him very much and he had a profound and lasting influence on the life of Sai Rochaldas.



Sai Rochaldas Sahib
(6 January, 1879—10 December, 1957)

Sai Rochaldas saw suffering, austerity, simplicity and poverty in the ashram of Sai Vasanram Sahib. Keeping himself away from the material wealth, Sai Vasanram Sahib had accepted hunger and suffering and remained ever absorbed in God. ‘Service’ was his watchword. Sai Rochaldas was deeply impressed with these qualities and he imbibed them in his formative years. He had thus set his foot on the path of love from his early years. Unlike children of his age, he was sober and loved anguish. When he was only twelve, his teacher Boolchand Advani advised him, among other things, not to watch the *tazia* processions in the month of Muharram. But Sai

Rochaldas expressed his inability to accept the advice in this regard, though he readily accepted the advice about other things. He pleaded with the teacher that he was so deeply moved and charmed by the music of *shehnai* that was played in *tazia* processions, that tears flowed profusely down his cheeks for a long time and he enjoyed immense bliss. Seeing his sincerity, the teacher withdrew his advice. In his dialogues later, Sai Rochaldas Sahib stressed the attribute of anguish and tears in love.

Sai Rochaldas married in 1901 and in that year he joined as a student in the Medical College in Hyderabad (Sind). It was in the same year at Hyderabad that he came in contact with the supreme sage, Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib, and accepted him as his satguru. The Revered Master was in his nineties and he was so much absorbed in God (*Ishq Haqiqi*) that he was quite oblivious of the world around him and remained in samadhi all the twenty four hours in a day. He loved Sai Rochaldas so much that he always called him 'My child'. No sooner did Sai Rochaldas get initiation under the Revered Master than he fully plunged himself into the process of God-realisation. He followed the precept whole-heartedly and with full concentration. Profound devotion, total obedience and complete self-surrender were the key-notes of his bond with his satguru.

After he passed out of the Medical College, Sai Rochaldas was appointed as a doctor at the Central Jail in Hyderabad (Sind). Shortly, he was asked by the Government to proceed on transfer to Aden¹. When Sai Rochaldas went to the Revered Master to seek his permission to go to Aden, the Revered Master hugged him with immense love and said, "The fakir is competent to order cancellation of your transfer, but it is obligatory for a seeker to abide by the will of the Lord." "My child is destined for a great yoga. Let him do that in my life-time," said the Revered Master to his disciples when they suggested to him humbly that Sai Rochaldas might not be sent so far away.

¹ At that time Aden, an important port in the Gulf of Aden, was under British control.

At Aden, Dr Rochaldas Sahib worked in an exceptional manner. He served the sick with full dedication and totally forgot his self. He personally supervised the arrangement of food for the patients so that neither the contractors nor the employees could cheat the patients and that the patients got right care. Cholera, small-pox and plague broke out in epidemic form two

or three times during his service tenure there. He served the patients day and night during those trying times. He would sit with the patients of those deadly diseases on their beds, clip their nails, cut their hair and do other jobs that even the ward attendants would refuse to do. He firmly believed that he was under the perfect care of his satguru. He was loved by the sick—men and women—and out of affection they called him *dada*². Once an Arab woman asked him, “*Dada*, are you a *kafir* (Hindu) or a *momin* (Muslim)?” “A *kafir*,” he replied. “No, no,” she said, “you may be a *kafir* only in body, but at heart you are a *momin*.” His officers were very pleased with his dedicated service and they desired that he might be honoured with a title, but he declined to accept the title. He considered service to the people to be the first duty of a human being. He always stressed the significance of service in his dialogues. His dedicated service later during the epidemics at Rohri is still remembered by many of his devotees and associates.

2 Elder brother

Notwithstanding his continual involvement in service to the sick and to others, Sai Rochaldas remained engaged in spiritual pursuits and in his love for the Lord. He was ever yearning for the satguru. But he always concealed his emotions, and outwardly remained quiet. He spoke only when it was absolutely necessary, in a few words. At times he would use only gestures. He did not like even a breath to go without remembering the beloved. He had little interest in personal care and comfort. The rocky terrain in Aden, where he lived, was heavily infested with scorpions. Because of his separation from the Revered Master, he refused to sleep on a cot and slept on the floor with the result that he got scorpion stings almost every night, and occasionally two to three times in a night. Yet he was not deterred in his resolve. Being in deep anguish and yearning for the beloved, how could he accept personal comforts and physical pleasures? He spent his nights tearfully remembering the satguru. He had gone to Aden, as it were, to bake himself in the fire of love.

He went to Aden in 1904 and came back home in 1906. On return, he was posted in the hospitals at Kotri, Hyderabad, Shikarpur and Jacobabad in Sind. After completing the five year contract of service with the Government, he left that job. His eldest brother advised him to start a private practice. But the Revered Master wrote to him saying, “Had I wished that he should earn

wealth, I would not have asked him to leave his job under the Government.” So Sai Rochaldas abandoned the idea of earning money and decided to render service in charity. He started a charitable dispensary at Rohri, which he managed with love and zeal. He also performed free eye operations. He had learnt ophthalmic surgery under the renowned surgeon of his time, Dr. Holland. He set up a separate charitable dispensary for the ophthalmic diseases. He also studied Ayurveda. Later, he developed special interest in homoeopathy and practised that system with great success during the last twenty-five years of his life. Besides the charitable dispensary at Rohri, he established a charitable dispensary at Karachi. One charitable dispensary functioned under his supervision at Hyderabad (Sind).

He had left himself so much in the hands of the Lord that after resigning the government service when he started free charitable practice, he did not raise funds from any source or ask for donations or subscriptions. Initially, he had kept a charity box in the dispensary for the patients to drop in a coin if they liked. Quite often the box remained empty. So it was removed. On many occasions there was hardly anything to eat at home. He accepted all these cheerfully and with pleasure. Yet, he would not refuse giving help when anyone approached him for it. Guests and visitors were always welcome.

It is very difficult to describe his profound regard for his satguru. He seldom spoke in his presence. He followed the precept of his satguru both in letter and in spirit. His actions and conduct were guided only by one consideration—conformity with the wishes of the satguru. He had attained total absorption (*fanai*) in his satguru, and the satguru then led him to the further stages of *fanai*.

One winter night, when he reached Dargah Sahib, he found the door closed. In his enthusiasm for the satguru he had not anticipated the time when he would actually reach there. If he knocked at the door, that would disturb the Revered Master in his meditation, and if he did not, he would remain in the open on a cold wintry night with nothing to cover himself with. He decided to remain out. He spent the whole night shivering in the open. When the Revered Master opened the door early in the morning, he found him standing in the courtyard. Instantly, the Revered Master asked a devotee to light a fire saying, “My child has remained out in the cold the whole night.” Then holding his hand in his own, the Revered Master warmed his hands on fire. What a bliss he might have earned by the divine touch!

When his co-disciple Bhai Gobindram Sahib passed away in 1921, Sai

Rochaldas Sahib¹ was consecrated to the spiritual seat. He and his associates (*sangat*) used to meet in the house of Bhai Gobindram Sahib for satsang in the evenings. They used to sit in silent meditation, quietly practising within. If a singer happened to be there, he would sing some devotional songs—songs of divine love, pathos, yearning, and anguish. Devotional singing in the quiet and serene atmosphere, and that, too, in the presence of the Master had a special effect; it would touch their mind, stir them with spiritual upsurge and bring tears in their eyes. When there was no singing, everyone was engaged in silent meditation. There were no talks, no discussions, no discourses. These used to be sessions of silence—of spiritual endeavour in silence.

¹ Henceforth referred to as the Master. He was also popularly known as Doctor Sahib.

The mode of satsang in his presence used to be either devotional singing or absolute silence. Rarely did Doctor Sahib speak in satsang or with his associates. Whenever he spoke, he was gentle, sweet and soft in his utterances, and everybody was eager to listen to his nectar-like words.

During his visits to Dargah Sahib¹ on the occasion of the annual *mela* (*urs*, death anniversary function) of the Revered Master, if he happened to speak informally with the associates, the news would instantly spread that Doctor Sahib was in conversation and all the devotees would rush in and sit around him because it was a rare opportunity for them to listen to Doctor Sahib. He spoke rarely. His utterances, being the outcome of the spiritual experiences attained after hard and long practice done in solitude and with anonymity, had great attraction and force. Never did he ask anybody to keep awake or act in a particular way. He set an example by his actions and living. Everybody loved the way he lived. It was after many years that he started speaking openly among the devotees and the associates.

¹ The Dargah where the Revered Master lived in Hyderabad (Sind).

The saints always prefer anonymity. They do not desire publicity or display of their spiritual attainments and are ever absorbed in the Self. They

come into the open when it is the divine will or when He puts them on a mission. It so happened that a well-known fakir, Sai Ghulam Mehdi Shah², who was a saint of very high order and lived in a nearby village called Shahpur Jahaniyan, received a divine command. He was ordained to go to Rohri and make known to the people the sapling that was growing there in the form of Dr Rochaldas Sahib. Next day, the fakir came with a group of devotees to the residence of Dr Rochaldas Sahib and started singing and dancing. He had composed a special song for the occasion which he was singing. The strain of the song was:

2 The fakir hailed from the same lineage to which Sai Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah Sahib belonged. He was alive in 1958 when the book was first published in Sindhi. At that time he was about 75 years old.

Why do you hide yourself?
Play no tricks with the lovers.

Hearing the song, a number of people gathered there. Doctor Sahib, too, came out. He received the fakir and his devotees with profound respect, brought them inside his house and served them with refreshments. The fakir showed deep affection to Doctor Sahib and invited him to accompany him, with his *sangat*, to his dwelling at Shahpur Jahaniyan. Doctor Sahib readily accepted the invitation. They came to Shahpur Jahaniyan on horse carriages. Songs of divine love charged with pathos and anguish were sung the whole night. On the next morning, the fakir politely said to Doctor Sahib, "It is good that you have maintained silence. It is nice to hide oneself among common people, but that should not be the disposition towards the *sangat*. I shall now ask you a question and shall get the answer from you. Tell us how far a seeker can progress by his own efforts and how far can he go with the help of his *murshid*?" Doctor Sahib remained quiet. The fakir repeated his question. Then Doctor Sahib said, "A seeker can, at best, hop or flutter like a sparrow. But once a *baz* (falcon) casts its eye upon it, it may then get hold of it in its claws and take it to such great heights and distances that the sparrow can never think of. The seeker may be compared to a sparrow and the *murshid* to a *baz*." Then someone asked, "Is it then necessary for a seeker to put in his effort? He may as well leave it to the *satguru* to take him to spiritual heights." "No," said Doctor Sahib, "it is not so. Like a sparrow, the seeker

must hop and flutter. How will a *baz* lift a sparrow if it remained quietly within its nest and made no effort to come out? A seeker must endeavour; that is obligatory for him. If his endeavour is approved by the *satguru* and he earns his grace that is wonderful.” Everybody applauded Doctor Sahib.

Once Doctor Sahib was invited to preside over a function organised to celebrate Janmashtami (birthday of Lord Krishna) at Rohri. As it has been said earlier, Doctor Sahib maintained strict silence in those days. So, he repeatedly declined the request. But the organisers of the programme were adamant. Eventually, he had to yield to their pressing request. In the function, there was a debate on who was superior, Lord Krishna or Lord Rama. Different opinions were expressed by the speakers. Some speakers said that Lord Krishna had sixteen attributes (*kala*) whereas Lord Rama had only fourteen. Eventually Doctor Sahib was asked to give his opinion. He said, “Nothing was wanting either in Rama or in Krishna because they both were the incarnations of the One. It was He who had incarnated Himself as Rama and Krishna to play the different roles and had manifested different attributes or potencies (*kala*) according to the specific needs of the times.” Then someone asked him about the two additional attributes of Lord Krishna. Doctor Sahib said, “The two additional attributes of Lord Krishna were love (*prem, ishq*) and ill-fame (*ninda, malamati*). Lord Krishna had incarnated himself to spread love whereas Lord Rama had incarnated himself to establish righteousness and code of conduct.” Someone further said, “When Mother Yashoda tied Krishna to trees, Krishna granted salvation to the trees.” In reply, Doctor Sahib said, “Likewise Lord Rama had granted salvation to stones. When he set his foot on a stone slab, Ahalya rose out of it and she attained salvation. There was nothing wanting in either of the two. The difference was in their roles. But it was the One who had enacted the different roles.” The whole audience applauded the Master for his views. It was for the first time that the Master had spoken in public.

The Master’s life himself represented a harmonious blend of the two attributes—attribute of love and attribute of righteousness in conduct. Generally a fakir is dominated by either of the two attributes. But the Master showed perfection both in love (*ishq*) and in conduct (*neeti*). He had all the qualities of a lover and rarely could someone match him in it. At the same time, he was firm in his conduct and had excellent dealings and relations with satguru, parents, brothers, sisters, wife, children, friends, devotees and neighbours, patients and others.

His father passed away while he was a child. He never disregarded the wishes of his mother. It was his practice to touch the feet of his mother early in the morning and apply the dust of her feet to his forehead. That had boosted his luck. He treated his eldest brother like his father. For years, he did not sit before him. When he grew up he did not do anything—not even going on a pilgrimage or visiting his satguru—if he did not have the approval of his brother. Generally his brother approved what he proposed.

There is a custom in the area to bake loaves on fire at a road crossing on the occasion of Holi festival. Once some people saw Doctor Sahib going around the fire after his brother, during the Holi festival. Later, someone asked him, “Sir, do you still follow the old customs?” The Master said, “These customs have come to us from our elders. I¹ was following my elders. It did not occur to me why and what for I did that; I just obeyed my elders. No other idea had arisen in my mind.”

¹ The Master did not use ‘I’ for himself. He always referred to himself in third person as ‘*banda*’ meaning a human being. For the convenience of readers in English, however, the word ‘I’ has been used in this text.

Once his eldest brother got angry with him as he had not checked the bills of a grocer and had paid the bills without scrutiny. He did not argue with his brother and remained quiet. Obviously, he had earned the divine boon of silence. If ever a nephew criticised or commented upon him, he would quietly smile at him and not utter a word in reply. Once a friend of his said, “Your brother gets angry with you without showing regard to your age.” The Master said, “While one is in a human body, one must have an elder in a human form to exercise control over the mind. Otherwise, the mind does not easily come under control.”

The Master was extremely fond of music. He appreciated good music. Devotional singing in the *satsang* at times continued for the entire night. He himself had a very good voice and sang well in his youth. Once while he was singing in the presence of his satguru, the Revered Master, the ego arose in him and he felt, “Today, I have sung very well.” He was so much distressed at the arousal of the subtle ego in him that he instantly took a vow never to sing again lest an instance like that might recur. Thenceforward he never sang. He concealed his endeavours and attainments so much that later when

devotees and others started gathering around him he never revealed to them that he was a good singer in his youth and had stopped singing for certain reasons. It came to be known, after he had passed away, from someone who had intimate knowledge of his early years. This shows how he had renounced even renunciation.

The Master firmly believed that a jiva must spend a part of his income in charity or for a good cause. He did not refuse help to anyone who approached him. He had dedicated his life to service in the name of God. He charged no fee for consultation or for drugs, and sought no doles or donations either for his personal living or for the dispensary. If a patient was too poor to afford essential diet, he would send to him food specially prepared for him. If it was a bread-earner in a family who happened to be bedridden, he would put some money for them in the packet containing medicine. Guests were always welcome at his house and he personally looked after their comforts and served them with humility and dedication. Even if a person who had previously harmed him came as a guest, he would not refuse hospitality to him. He had no animosity for anybody, because he saw *that* in everybody. He was truly *nirvair* (free from animosity). Since it is the One who is everywhere, who can have animosity and against whom?

Though the Master did not believe in ostentation and was very economical and kept only those things that were necessary in daily life, yet he loved orderliness and gracefulness. If someone did not fix a bed properly, he would tell him, “Do not kill your aesthetic sense.” If a child did not polish his shoes regularly, he would tell him, “If you must have food regularly, your shoes, too, must have food regularly.”

The Master valued service very much. He had received immense benefits by his selfless service he had rendered in the name of God and derived profound bliss by that. Stressing the need of service, he used to say, “Service is one way to earn blessings. One learns humility by service.” He loved humility very much and demonstrated it by his way of life. If any of his associates was displeased with him he would approach him with humility and seek his forgiveness, even though the other person was at fault. He would not hesitate to seek pardon of people much younger to him. In case an associate did not reconcile himself with the Master despite his expression of humility he would show no less affection and regard to him and say, “May God bless him.” At times he used to express pity for such people in these words: “These people do not know what pleases God. Presently, He might tolerate their

whims and fancies, but it is possible that tomorrow He might be totally indifferent to them. The Lord is supremely independent (*bepervah*). Such jivas may have to repent and regret later.” There was a deep meaning in every word he uttered.

The Master was a man of God-realisation. Whatever he said or did always resulted in good, though *prima-facie* some of his actions might have appeared incorrect or harmful. Once he was attending to patients at his dispensary in Rohri. Another doctor (P) was sitting by his side. A patient (Q) came and started speaking about his ailment. The Master and Doctor P listened to Q’s complaint. The Master who was listening with his eyes closed opened his eyes and prescribed a medicine. After Q had left, Doctor P told the Master that the medicine prescribed did not correspond with the symptoms mentioned by Q. “Why didn’t you draw my attention to it while I was writing the prescription?” said the Master very politely. “Because it was embarrassing to point it out in the presence of the patient.” replied Doctor P. The Master asked him to take out a book for reference. On checking, it was found that the medicine prescribed did not match the symptoms. The Master then said to Doctor P, “Kindly remind me when Q comes here tomorrow. More details will be obtained from him and then it will be seen if there is need for a change in the treatment.”

Next day when the Master and Doctor P were attending to patients, the Master said to Doctor P, “I am going out for a while to visit a patient. Kindly attend to the patients in the dispensary.” No sooner had the Master left than Q came in. He told Doctor P that he had got more than 50 per cent relief by the medicine and requested the same medicine to be repeated. Q became all right within three or four days. It is difficult to say how it all happened. Many times this sort of thing happened between the Master and Doctor P. One day when the Master was in a special mood, he explained to Doctor P the secrets of therapy of the higher¹ order.

1 Perhaps mystic. The actual words used were *Haziq Himkat ka raz*.

The Master was a householder and professional. Yet he was so adept in yoga that many yogis came to him to learn advanced and difficult yoga practices. He made no display of his attainments. Once a *sanyasi* (recluse) came to him and said, “Sir, I have heard of your expertise in pranayama.

Kindly give me some advanced lessons.” As usual the Master tried to put him off, but the *sanyasi* was adamant. Eventually, the Master agreed and gave him a demonstration in pranayama. The sanyasi was astonished at the performance. Talking about it later, he said that he had been in the company of yogis at Uttar Kashi and Swarg Ashram, but he had not seen anybody practising pranayama with such deftness as the Master did.

On another occasion, talking about his practice of pranayama, the Master said that when he first attempted to take his breath out of his body, then with one pull of the breath he was roaming, with his body, high in the sky above the Lansdowne Bridge² in Rohri.

2 The famous suspension railway bridge over the Indus at Rohri

Saints like the Master are called *Ghaus Vajudi* (Self-realised). The Master had gone through all modes of practice, so he could help his disciples in every manner. It is difficult to narrate here all the practices he had gone through, because the practices being personal to a seeker are confidential.

Once a disciple asked Sai Hadi Baksh at the Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad to give an example of someone who had attained perfection both on the spiritual plane and the mundane. Sai Hadi Baksh gave the example of King Janaka. When the disciple said that this was an instance from the hoary past, Sai Hadi Baksh gave him the example of Doctor Sahib. As a proof of what he said, Sai Hadi Baksh asked the disciple to note down the time as at that moment and then said that at that time Doctor Sahib was in meditation at the cremation ground in Rohri. He said that if this came out to be true, then what he had said of Doctor Sahib was also true. The disciple wrote a letter to Doctor Sahib to find out if he was in meditation at the cremation ground in Rohri at that time. The reply that came confirmed that at that time Doctor Sahib had gone to the cremation ground to attend a funeral and had spent some time there in meditation.

The Master frequently visited Dargah Sahib and always participated in the annual *mela* held on the occasion of the death anniversary of the Revered Master. There he had the privilege to carry on his head the *mendi* (the floral sheet, *chaddar*) in a ceremonial procession and to lay it on the grave of the Revered Master at the Dargah Sahib.

When India was divided and Pakistan was formed, Sind became a part of

Pakistan. But the Master continued to live there. In January, 1948 Karachi saw riots and looting on a large scale. The Master's house and his dispensary were not spared. Two persons from a mob held his eldest son, Dr R.M. Hari, by his arms while another held a dagger pointed at his chest so that Dr Hari could not offer physical resistance, and the rest of the mob ransacked the house. Nothing was left in the house, not even a small utensil, except the picture of Sai Qutab Ali Shah that was fixed on a wall.

Following the riots, mass exodus of people started. Millions of people left their homes and crossed over to India. The Master, too, left with his family. The family had nothing with them when they left for India. He first came to Surat and then went to Bhuj. From there he came to a refugee camp in Kalyan in the erstwhile Bombay Province. The refugee camp had been set up in the army barracks built during the Second World War. The barracks were very crude structures, having been hurriedly built for a temporary purpose during the war. They did not have the minimum conveniences needed by a family. There were no roads and proper drainage system. The area received heavy rainfall during the monsoon season and was heavily infested with mosquitoes.

The Master was given two medium-sized halls or sheds in the camp. He started normal life with no difficulty as if nothing had happened. Except the change of place, there was no change in his life-style, his routine, his disposition, his dealings with others. He was as cheerful as ever before. Satsang and devotional singing started as usual. A charitable dispensary was also started. A hall was used for satsang in the morning, as a dispensary during the day, again for satsang in the evening and for meditation and devotional singing at night. The satsang and the presence of the Master gave a healing touch and solace to the large number of uprooted families. Soon devotees, even from outstation, started coming in large numbers because they wanted his advice, blessings and solace.

The sector in the camp where the Master settled down was named Shanti Nagar—meaning the abode of peace—by the refugees who had settled there. The place, indeed, had become an abode of peace.

It is remarkable to note that the incident involving his son, Dr Hari, in the riots at Karachi, his migration from his home, and the ordeals of life at Kalyan never found a mention in his dialogues or conversation later. His attitude was as if nothing had happened. For him there was no friend or foe, no joy or sorrow, no gain or loss. He had even-cognition. He saw good in

everything. When others expressed unhappiness before him, he would say, “One must thank God for settling one’s account of *karma* in the present birth, thus saving one of the ordeals of the future births.” He loved suffering and stressed its value repeatedly in his dialogues.

Due to unusual conditions, many of his associates and devotees who after migration had settled down in other cities—Delhi, Bhuj, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Ajmer, Lucknow, Hardwar, etc—were unable to go to Kalyan to meet the Master. But the Master had not forgotten them. He could not deprive them of his affection, care, company and satsang. Though he had his regular abode at Shanti Nagar in Kalyan, he travelled frequently to various places to meet the devotees there, despite his advanced age and the discomforts of journey. Wherever he went and stayed, satsang was a part of his daily routine. It is said in the scriptures that it is a sign of good luck if a person spends some time in satsang, and he earns great merit by that. The Master went to the devotees to give them the opportunity of satsang, to help them on the spiritual path and to see that they did not forget God even if they were put in adverse circumstances. As a proverb in Hindi goes, a well may go to the thirsty to quench their thirst. This is exactly what the Master was doing for his devotees.

Once he came to stay with one of his relatives. The host used to touch the Master’s feet in the morning before leaving for his office and again in the evening on return from office. Each time the Master greeted him lovingly with the words *Hari Om*. One day the Master did not greet him. He maintained an attitude of open indifference to him for another four or five days. The host was distressed at the sudden change in the attitude of the Master. Unable to decide what to do, the host put a note on a piece of paper on the Master’s hand saying “Will you love me or disown me?” “It will be both,” wrote the Master as a reply and returned the slip to him. There was a hidden purpose in the words and the attitude of the Master. Soon he bestowed immense spiritual grace on that person. He did not wish others to notice it. With an attitude of indifference he used to bestow divine grace on a person in such a manner that it did not attract others’ attention. He always concealed what he did for a devotee.

He possessed immense occult powers but did not use them. He considered the use of occult powers as an obstacle on the spiritual path. He believed that spiritual progress comes to a halt if a seeker attempts to use occult powers.

It happens rarely that one attains saintliness of a very high order while

living as a householder. But the Master had shown that family life was not a hindrance on the spiritual path, and that one could realise God even as a householder. What was necessary for a jiva was to have the correct way of life. Though married, the Master lived like a yogi, maintaining exclusive dependence on God. He was always humble and an image of love and compassion. He never exposed anybody nor did he find fault with anybody. He was continually on march on the spiritual path and remained immersed in divine love or *Ishq Haqiqi* as if he was born to be in love with God. In the words of Fakir Sachal:

He had nothing else to do,
Except to realise the Self,
Descending from Heavens,
He came to spread love.

In June, 1953, while he was travelling by train from Delhi to Lucknow, the Master had a serious heart attack on the way. He was confined to bed for four months at Lucknow and was then taken to Kalyan. While at Lucknow, his mind was seriously pondering on how the times had become so difficult that the people were all the time busy struggling for their bread and had little time left for meditation and how they could progress on the spiritual path and attain salvation. While he was seized with this issue, Sri Vasishthaji appeared before him and said, “Not even a leaf stirs without the will of God; there is a hidden divine purpose behind everything, every language, every sound and every letter. It is the law of nature that the remedy for every disease is hidden in it. In the same manner by understanding every letter and finding out the latent divine meaning behind it, a jiva can attain salvation. All letters in every language contain the knowledge of *Oneness* or of non-duality. If by rearranging or analysing the letters in a word, a jiva discovers the latent divine meaning in it, he will attain salvation. This is the primordial language. We may also call it the *Child's Language*. You have to make it known among the people. The jivas will attain salvation by it.”

By the grace of Sri Vasishthaji, the Master spontaneously started speaking a new language. The Master wondered how it had happened and who made him speak in that manner. He accepted it as the divine play. Using the style of an acrostic he would suggest a divine or spiritual word for every letter or sound in a word and discover the spiritual connotation for every word. Or, he

would rearrange the letters or the sounds to form a new word that represented virtue or divinity. He believed that there was no evil in any word and that every sound represented divinity or oneness or the non-dual. He said that a jiva must understand and follow it.

Sri Guru Nanak, too, had suggested a spiritual acrostic under the title *Patti* and it is contained in Guru Granth Sahib. The Master used this approach in his everyday conversation. Henceforth his dialogues were mainly in the *Child's Language*. For every word that was spoken, he discovered the latent spiritual meaning in it. He also started interpreting the scriptures by using the *Child's Language* and discovered the more subtle meaning for what had been said.

The dialogues were in Sindhi. It is quite difficult to translate the acrostic and the use of the *Child's Language* from one language to another. Translation of these dialogues—and these were sizeable—has been left out in this English edition. A fresh exercise will be necessary to introduce this idea and approach in English. A few examples have, however, been incorporated in the dialogues where the equivalents in English were amenable to acrostic formulations that had connotations similar to those in the Sindhi text and fitted rightly in the subject matter of the dialogue.

In November, 1957 the Master had an attack of jaundice in Kalyan. He did not allow any treatment for himself. He had taken, in advance, leave of some who were very dear to him. Despite the physical ailment, his mind was in a very fine state. All the time he uttered 'Thank God', in a very sweet tone. He demonstrated supreme patience and fortitude. It has been rightly said that there cannot be a better mode of love than to resign to the will of the Lord. The Master adhered to this principle throughout his life. He left his mortal frame at twenty-six minutes past four early in the morning on 10 December, 1957 corresponding to the third day of the dark side of the moon in the month of *Margashirsa* 2014 *Vikrami Samvat*.

After his passing away, a very simple *samadhi* was set up in the hall in his house at Shanti Nagar¹. Satsang is conducted regularly every day. Dr R.M. Hari, the Master's eldest son and also an enlightened person, succeeded to the spiritual seat (*gaddi*). The death anniversary of the Master is celebrated every year according to the dates in the Indian calendar (*Vikrami Samvat*). The celebrations continue for three days. Devotees from different parts come to participate in the programme and to earn the blessings of the Master.

1 Some years ago Kalyan was divided between two municipalities of Kalyan and Ulhasnagar and Shanti Nagar became a part of Ulhasnagar township.

Saints like the Master are immortal. Fakir Bedil has said:

Those who have realised the Truth
Do not die.
Do not doubt this fact,
O! you ignorant.
Those who have realised the Self
Do not die.
They grace the world
In innumerable ways.
To the world they are simple men,
But in reality they are divine.
They bring relief in suffering
To the vast multitudes.

MEETING 1

SATSANG 1

(Holy Association)

SHANTI NAGAR (KALYAN) 12 October 1952

Every time I¹ visited the Master in Bombay for medical consultation and treatment, he would very fondly and in a sweet and enchanting manner invite me to his place in Shanti Nagar, about 40 miles north-east of Bombay. He repeated this invitation time and again. My conscience felt that the invitation from a sage was not just an invitation, but was a providential opportunity that must not be missed. The Master is a renowned physician; he is also known as a spiritual doctor.

¹ the devotee who recorded the dialogues and notes

On a Sunday afternoon, I arrived there in the company of a few friends. As I entered the barrack, I saw the Master seated on a *duree* (simple carpet) spread on the floor. Behind him was placed a bed-roll for back-rest, but he was sitting erect and was not resting against it. Greeting us in a highly affectionate tone, he said, “O! dear, you have come. At long last you have shown consideration for this side! Welcome, welcome, welcome.” As we bowed before him to pay obeisance, he patted us on our backs and said, “May God bless you! May you be blessed!” I was deeply touched by his warm and affectionate welcome. A simple refreshment was served to us. It consisted of roasted gram and a glass of water. Despite our saying that we did not need it, he insisted on it and said, “You have come all the way and must have something.”

It was a few minutes to four. Men and women gradually started coming in. They paid their obeisance to the Master and took their seats. Women were seated to his right and men to his left. Each one he was greeting very sweetly with folded hands uttering *Hari Om*. A serene atmosphere of tranquility prevailed all around. To some he was talking gently in a whisper-like tone,

enquiring about their welfare etc. In between, he would glance at the gathering, emitting affection and grace. His eyes were shining with divine radiance in a very blissful manner. All eyes were fixed on him. As the clock struck four, he gently addressed a lady saying, “Today, let us read from Sri Ramakrishna and see what the Lord ordains for us.” She brought the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Placing it in his hands, she said, “May you, sir, open it with your gracious hands.” He opened the book with deep reverence and then passed it on to her. Though the text was in English, she read it out in Sindhi with ease and fluency, translating it silently, as if the book had been written in Sindhi. The passage selected read as follows:

“...Some have heard of milk, some have seen it, and there are some, besides, who have drank it. God can indeed be seen; what is more, one can talk to Him.

“The first stage is that of the beginner. He studies and hears. Second is the stage of the struggling aspirant. He prays to God, meditates on Him, and sings His name and glories. The third stage is that of the perfect soul. He has seen God, realized Him directly and immediately in his inner Consciousness. Last is the stage of the supremely perfect, like Chaitanya. Such a devotee establishes a definite relationship with God, looking on Him as his Son or Beloved.”

The Master was listening intently. Then, addressing the gathering, he said, “Please see how the sage describes the path sequentially and stage-wise. The path that is laid out according to stages is the right path and the safest mode, so that progressing on it gradually, the seeker may attain the ultimate. Starting on the *path of actions (karma marg)* a jiva may enter the *path of devotion and love (bhakti marg)*, and then the *path of knowledge (gyan marg)*.

“Proceeding from the path of actions, some seekers directly enter the path of knowledge (*gyan marg*). Generally, it is the yogis who do it. They achieve this state by yogic practices. If, however, the subtle ego is aroused at this stage, they then tumble down to the path of actions. The path of knowledge is highly delicate and subtle and, therefore, extremely slippery. A slight omission can result in a severe loss. The longer the step taken, the more serious is the slip back. If the aspirant has moved from the path of actions (*karma marg*) into the path of knowledge (*gyan marg*), the return position, in the event of a slip back, is into the path of actions (*karma marg*). This is a serious setback. But, if the aspirant has progressed through the path of

devotion and love (*bhakti marg*) and then entered the path of knowledge (*gyan marg*), the setback in the event of a slip back for any reason is not that serious, because he returns from the path of knowledge to the path of devotion—he falls from the third stage into the second stage, and not into the first one. Humility is an essential feature of the path of devotion (*bhakti marg*) and there is little danger of the subtle ego arising there.

“Hence, according to Sri Ramakrishna, the first stage is where the aspirant hears and reads about God. This marks the beginning of the path of actions (*karma marg*). Here a jiva first becomes inquisitive and asks: Who am *I*? What for am *I* born in the world? Where do *I* come from? Where shall *I* return? He attempts to understand these by himself, but does not get the insight. What, then, should he do? He may give up. But the lucky one does not get peace due to the unanswered questions. These questions arise in his mind repeatedly. He approaches other sources. An aspirant may find answers to his questions through three sources: holy books or scriptures (*sat shastra*), holy company (*satsang*), and divine masters (*satguru*).

“The aspirant reads books, finds answers to some questions and gets some enlightenment. Scriptures tell him that all the divine treasures are within a jiva, and all doubts are removed with the attainment of the divine treasures. The body of a jiva is like a rock and a treasure of bliss (*ananda*) is buried under it. He has only to cut the rock and unearth the treasures. How to do that? The scriptures cannot explain this, because they are mute. They are the mute companions of a jiva.”

Here, someone in the gathering asked a question.

Question: “Sir, the scriptures describe everything. How do you say that they do not tell everything?”

Master: “Yes, there is nothing lacking in the scriptures, because these are the utterances arising out of the experiences of sages. Yet, they are mute. They are helpful up to a point and not beyond that. As soon as the right attitude is developed through the spiritual practices, the jiva gets all the insight from within. Thereafter all scriptures are within. In the ultimate analysis, the scriptures are the product of the experiences within. All is within. Look, there have been sages who were not literate and had not scanned books or scriptures and yet they had full insight, because their concentration was fixed firmly on the Lord and they remained merged in Him. God is omniscient and all-knowing. These qualities are, therefore, easily developed in sages, and hence they know everything. He obtains the light from within. All is within; a

jiva has only to acquire the technique of uncovering that. At this stage, the jiva realises the need for holy company (*satsang*)¹, and he is drawn towards it. No sooner does he hear of *satsang* than he runs there. He goes to *satsang*, and not to a place where the scriptures are merely recited or tales from the epics narrated.”

1 The word ‘satsang’ in Sanskrit is composed of two words: *Sat* = Truth, *Sang* = Association. It means association with the Truth or the Divine or with those who have realised the Truth.

Question: “Sir, is there a distinction between *satsang* and scripture recitation (*katha*, *kirtan*) sessions?”

Master: “Yes, there is a vast difference between the two. Scripture recitals (*katha*) may involve just turning the pages and narrating tales and parables. There usually one lends one’s ears overtly and yet one might be engaged in doing something with the hands. It is not uncommon that women, while listening to scriptures, keep knitting or doing some odd jobs with the hands. But this is not admissible in *satsang*. One is required to be all-attentive in *satsang*; concentration is an essential prerequisite. One has to lend the ears of the mind. *Satsang* is not a story-telling session. The main characteristic features of *satsang* are: first, there is a discourse about *Sat* (the Truth, the Absolute) and, secondly, the talk is given by a sage (evolved soul) or it is given in the presence of one who has realised the Truth. This is *satsang*. The others are mere recitation (*katha* or *kirtan*) sessions. However, if a jiva participates in the recitation sessions with full concentration and imbibes something, he gets the benefit of *satsang*. But ordinarily the recitation (*katha* and *kirtan*) sessions do not have the same status as *satsang*; the status of *satsang* is very high.”

Question: “Sir, what benefits accrue to a jiva from *satsang*?”

Master: “The benefits accruing to a jiva from *satsang* are immense and can hardly be described. The psychic vibrations of the divine personalities direct the thought processes of the audience in one direction and check the mental distractions. The wandering of the mind is stopped. The control of the mind facilitates physical posture. Body reflexes or movements of hands and feet are restrained. The posture becomes steadfast. It is said that while in *satsang*, a jiva must try to remain in a fixed posture, no matter if the joints are cramped. This leads to the mastery of physical posture and the concentration

of mind (psychic processes). A jiva living in the world is subject to innumerable impressions (*samskar*) and impurities (*vikar*). How to cleanse the mind of all these? There is only one remedy, and that is association with the evolved souls (saints and sages). This helps in the evolution and purification of the mind. All this cannot be possible without endeavour. There are many practical difficulties on the spiritual path, and a jiva cannot solve all of them on his own. But when he associates himself regularly with the divine beings and intensively enjoys the grace of a sage, then all his questions are answered. By the graceful look and the blessings of the sage, all solutions come to him from within.”

Having said this the Master became quiet for a while. Then he addressed the gathering in a very gentle manner.

Master: “Satsang is a peerless royal fort. A jiva learns divine living when he participates in satsang. Divine souls come to satsang and coming into contact with them, the jiva acquires the spiritual hue. Seeing and hearing the sages, he develops eagerness for a guru. He craves for a master who would lead him to bliss. He also becomes eager to learn the technique by which he might be able to cut the rocks within himself and unearth the treasures lying under them. A state of restlessness sets upon him, and it enhances his drive to find a guru (spiritual guide or preceptor) for himself.”

Question: “Sir, is satsang necessary only for lay persons like me, or is it essential even for those who are already on the spiritual path?”

Master: “It is essential for them as well. Just as a battery has to be charged regularly, so a jiva must attend satsang regularly for his spiritual recharging. Let us take another example. A banyan tree has its roots deep down in the earth. It looks green, yet a lot of dust and other impurities remain deposited on the leaves. On the other hand, small plants in a garden look neat and fresh because the gardener, besides watering the roots, showers the plants from above also. By the same analogy, while the aspirant is served with the water of devotion and love from within, he must, like the tender plants, receive also the external showers in satsang. In his daily life, he is continually subject to mundane forces, and satsang is the only way to neutralise these mundane forces. Satsang is, therefore, absolutely necessary for all.”

Then a hymn in prayer to the Formless Absolute (*Brahm*) was recited in chorus and this marked the end of the satsang that day and all the people dispersed. I, too, sought the Master’s permission to return to my home in Bombay. He pressed me lovingly to stay there overnight, but on my

expressing inability to do so on that day he permitted me, with his blessings, to leave.

I had not anticipated the charm and attraction of the place until I came there and experienced the ecstatic bliss of the satsang. The Master's divine words and glances and simple explanations could appeal even to a child. "Could there be anything mystic about his invitation?" I asked myself. The utterances of saints are not often easily understood as they contain hidden references. Just as it is the property of the magnet—and not desire—to attract iron, so it is the nature of a saint which attracts everybody towards him. Everybody is attracted by his pervading love. There is no personal effort to attract. We can describe the force, because we feel the pull. I was deeply touched by the way the Master received us. The warmth and simplicity that he showed surpassed even what a mother would do for her child. It was an expression of infinite love and gentleness. What is more astonishing was that whosoever he talked to carried the conviction that the sage loved him the most. His universal love embraced everybody equally. His benediction, 'May God bless you!' was not a casual utterance. It was said with intense sincerity and goodwill, and was charged with divine forces.

The Master's humility was beyond description. I was stunned when while greeting us he said, "So you have been kind to me," though the position was the other way round. He was benign to everybody, and yet he considered others kind to him. Everyone who approached him was received with folded hands and greeted with *Hari Om*, without discrimination. It was obvious that the sage saw the One amongst all and was even minded.

What struck me particularly was that all my mental disturbances disappeared and my mind became quiet as I entered into his presence. I felt an unusual calm and peace within, and a total absence of tensions and anxiety. It was a magic touch. My experiences were also corroborated by my friends who had accompanied me. There was an expression of tranquility on every face in the satsang. It has been said in scriptures that a distinguishing mark of a *Brahm Gyani* (one who has realised the Self) is that in his presence a person experiences a blissful calmness and peace within and also the absence of mental disturbances. The psychic radiations emanating from his person produce a unique impact on the audience and give an experience of peace and tranquility within.

The physical appearance of the place deeply touched my feelings. It was an old and discarded army barrack in a camp built during the Second World

War. The camp was now being used for housing the refugees from Sind who had migrated to India after the partition in 1947. This particular barrack was a simple hall, measuring approximately 20 ft by 40 ft, with the brick walls raised crudely and hastily during the War. The doors and the windows were damaged and the roof tiles had many holes. The area received heavy rainfall during the monsoon. The kind of protection this barrack could offer during inclement weather was obvious to me at a glance. Unlike other barracks in the neighbourhood, this one had not been furnished. It had no semblance of a temple or a shrine either. All that was to be found there included a *duree* (a very simple cotton carpet) with patches, a few cupboards for medicines for the dispensary and books, and a few benches for patients. Across the hall there were two cross wires with white cotton curtains rolled over them. When pulled down, the curtains divided the hall into four sections used for various purposes of the dispensary during the day—one section for dispensing, the second one for examining patients, the third one as consultation room and the fourth one for storing materials. All the items in the hall were meant for the basic needs only, and not for comfort or luxury.

The Master is a person with high spiritual realisation and is respected by all. When I looked at the poor dwelling, I was stunned by the contrast. Initially, my reaction was one of wonder and sympathy. Why is he staying there forsaking all comforts that he would get in case he chose to live in the nearby city of Bombay or somewhere else? The saint is omnipotent and nothing is out of his reach. Is it to share the sufferings of the vast multitude of refugees settled in these camps and to serve them in various ways for their medical care, mental comfort and spiritual uplift that he has decided to live here?

Outwardly he does not bear any mark of priesthood, monkhood or a holy personage. By his guise and appearance he gives the impression of an ordinary person. He is simply dressed in a white shirt and pyjamas.

It is said that like various government officials, who are assigned different jurisdictions by the head of the state, the saints, too, are assigned specific areas by the Lord. Are these refugees placed under the care of the Master? It is obvious that the sage has accepted the discomforts willingly and happily, and not under compulsion. To him suffering is not suffering at all. He is beyond all mundane and egoistic considerations. The gloomy looks that are commonly visible among the camp inmates can never appear on his face. Ever cheerful, his face radiates with serene freshness.

As I reflect on all these attributes of the sage, I am reminded of a Sindhi couplet which reads:

All men are not beautiful,
All birds are not swans;
Only in rare cases
Does one find the blessed fragrance.

I felt an urge to be in his blissful presence again and to enjoy the satsang. I waited eagerly for another opportunity.



Sai Rochaldas Sahib

MEETING 2

DIVINE MASTERS 1

(Satguru)

Shantinagar (KALYAN) 18 October, 1952 (evening time)

It was about 3:30 in the afternoon when I along with some others arrived here. The Master was seated on a *duree* on the floor. As we bowed before him, he greeted us with a smile and said affectionately, “Dear, you have come! Welcome, welcome, welcome.”

Soon we were led across the lane to another barrack that was his residence, for a cup of tea. This barrack, too, was a hall divided with straw mats into four sections. We finished our tea briskly and rushed back to where the Master was seated. By this time the size of the gathering had increased. Men and women were seated on either side of the Master. He was in a very cheerful and jovial mood and was enquiring about the wellbeing of the visitors. Suddenly, turning to a lady, he said, “Today we shall have recitation from Guruvani¹.” She opened the book with deep reverence. The following hymn composed by Guru Amardas Sahib, the third Guru in the lineage of Guru Nanak, was selected.

¹ Hymns by the Sikh Gurus

*Ja piru Janai apna,
Tan man age dhariye,
Sohaganee karam kamavadia,
Sei karam kariye,
Sahaje sach milavada,
Sachu vadai dei,
Bhai re gur bin bhagati na hoe,
Bin gur bhagati na paiye,
Je lochai sabh koi.*

Explanation: “He who wants to realise his lover (God), must surrender his body and mind to Him and do exactly as a truly devoted married woman (or a saint) does, and thus he will easily attain the Lord who bestows true nobility upon him. None can acquire devotion (*bhakti*) without a guru. Howsoever one may desire, one cannot gain devotion (*bhakti*) without a guru.”

Fortunately, the selection was directly related to the subject discussed last week. On the previous occasion, the Master had stressed three pre-requisites for a seeker: scriptures (*sat shastra*), holy company (*satsang*) and enlightened masters (*satguru*). He had talked at some length about scriptures and holy company (*sat shastra* and *satsang*). The hymn just selected referred to divine masters (*satguru*). After the explanation was read, the Master said, “Please note that in this hymn, Guruji states very explicitly that salvation is not possible without a *guru* (preceptor).” Here, someone in the gathering raised a question.

Question: “Sir, what is the meaning of *guru* (preceptor)?”

Master: “The word *guru* is composed of two words, *gu* + *ru*; *gu* means darkness and *ru* means light. *Guru* is one who leads from darkness to light and helps in the attainment of gyan (knowledge of the Truth). There are three types of gurus: *guru*, *satguru* and *poorn satguru*. The word *guru* is equivalent to the English word tutor. Tutors teach about the material phenomena and impart mundane knowledge in schools and colleges. The word teacher may be used for *satguru*. A *satguru* suggests the path to the Real or the Absolute and directs the people to this path. The third category is that of *poorn satguru*. In English, we may say ‘Master’. Masters (*poorn satguru*) are the liberated souls who promote the seekers on the spiritual path by their glance. Having crossed the cycle of actions (karma) and having attained the Absolute, these liberated souls are reincarnated on this earth for the welfare and benefit of others.”

Question: “Sir, when does a jiva get a guru?”

Master: “A jiva gets a guru only when he has a strong craving, an intense yearning or deep fervour for a guru. It is aroused in him in due course as a result of his continual participation in *satsang*.

“Here I shall narrate an anecdote. Once there lived a man who had cultivated an intense desire for a guru, but did not know where and how to get one. Not knowing what to do, he prayed to God, ‘O! Lord, I do not know where and how to get my guru. Now I take a vow that I will not take food until you send me a guru. My Lord, send me a guru or else I die,’ Nearby in

another village lived a sage. It was his daily routine to go out early in the morning on horseback to the jungle, collect firewood and return to his place in the evening. He would be in meditation all the time. The horse was well trained and would carry the sage to and from the jungle without being directed. The sage would remain absorbed in meditation all the time. One day, it so happened that the horse changed its usual path. Suddenly, as the sage woke up from his meditation and noticed the change in the behaviour of the animal, he became slightly alert and directed the horse to its routine path. Soon again, he was absorbed in meditation. But when he returned to the normal plane, he was astonished to find the horse again on the new path. He redirected the horse to its usual path, but it refused to go forward. Thinking that there might be a divine will behind this attitudinal change in the horse, the sage allowed it to go as it desired. After going on the new path for a while, the horse halted outside a hut. The sage understood the situation and knocked at the door. Out came the man who had taken the vow to die. He bowed to the sage with deep reverence. The sage said, 'Sir, your intense desire has attracted me to this place. Let me know what you want.' The man narrated everything to him. The sage replied, 'The Lord has directed me to you, otherwise I do not cross this path.' Then he initiated that man."

Having narrated this anecdote the Master continued in a very firm tone.

Master: "Let a jiva once cultivate that intense yearning! Let him develop that deep interest! Let him make that firm resolve to give up life in Self-realisation! In these times, in certain cases, the saints are ordained to go to the people to initiate them into spiritualism. Now the human life-span is short. Lest it is wasted, the saints may go to the people, under the orders of the Lord, to teach them divinity and bring them on to the right path.

"I shall narrate to you my own case. When I was about ten years old, I came into the company of a well-known saint, Sai Vasanram, in my hometown, Rohri. There I learnt what service is and how the poor and the needy are to be attended to. I watched keenly and tried to understand the ways of life there. Being very young and of impressionable age, I assimilated the ideas very well. I developed an attitude of devotion for Sai Vasanram, and would accompany him to his guru Sai Parushah in the town. The faces of these two saints got so firmly fixed in my mind that, after their passing away, whenever I would concentrate on them and present the problems before them, some solution would naturally be found and I would be led out of my difficulties.

“I had also developed close friendship with Mulo, son of Sai Vasanram, who was of my age. One day, some years later, Mulo said to me that it was laid down in scriptures that salvation is not possible without a guru and, therefore, we must find a guru for ourselves. But we did not know how and where to find a guru. He used to raise this issue quite often. One day he proposed, ‘Let us go to the dargah of a particular saint to spend a night in prayer there to get some guidance.’ Though I had been married very recently, and it was a severe winter, yet I accepted his proposal. We spent three nights continuously in prayer, but did not get an answer. Mulo was not at all disheartened, and he said that these efforts would not go in vain, even though we had not got an answer. At that time I was a student in the Medical College in Hyderabad (Sind), about 150 miles south of Rohri. The vacation was soon over and I returned to my college to resume my studies.

“One night Sai Vasanram and his guru Sai Parushah appeared before me in a vision, and said that they would very soon direct me to a perfect master.

“I had a cousin who was my classmate, and we lived together in a hostel. Some days after my aforesaid vision, I noticed a sudden change in the daily routine of my cousin. At dusk, he would shut himself in a room upstairs in the hostel and remain inside for a long time. Suspecting that he was engaged in spiritual practices there, I decided to find out the facts. One day before his appointed time I went into that room, unlatched the shutters of a window, but kept the window closed. At the appointed time, when he had shut himself inside, I pushed the shutters a little very gently and saw that my cousin was sitting in lotus posture and engaged in meditation. Then I pulled back the shutters without being noticed. When having finished he came out, I pressed him to tell me all that he had been doing. Upon great insistence, he revealed that he had been initiated by a great Sufi saint, Sai Qutab Ali Shah, whom he called the Revered Master and who lived at a dargah near Hyderabad. He had accepted him as his preceptor. The Revered Master believed in yogic practices, constant communion with God and devotion.

“I was excited at this and requested my cousin to take me to the Revered Master. At that time the Revered Master had gone on a few days visit to an island, some miles away from Hyderabad, across the River Indus. We—my cousin, myself, and another friend who too was a disciple of the Revered Master—decided to visit him at the island. When we arrived there, the Revered Master was delighted to see us. Interceding on my behalf, my friend requested the Revered Master to kindly initiate me. He agreed and suggested

that I might be brought to the Dargah on a particular date.

“When we arrived at the Dargah on the appointed date, the Revered Master was in meditation and some people were seated before him. Bowing to him with deep reverence, we took our seats very quietly. After a short while, someone in the group requested the Revered Master to accept him as his disciple. On enquiry by the Revered Master, the man said that he hailed from the family of the well-known Sufi saint Sai Dalpatrai. With excitement the Revered Master remarked, ‘Yes, we owe a responsibility to him and shall certainly accept you.’ Then turning to someone he continued, ‘Please let him be seated on the sand mound a little away. On way home, I shall do the needful.’ There was no reference about me. Disheartened, I remembered Sai Vasanram. Instantly, I saw him in a vision. He assured me that my time had come and asked me not to lose heart. Then the vision disappeared. At that very moment, my friend shook me by my shoulder and suggested that I too might take a seat on an adjoining mound in that direction in the hope that my wish too would be granted by the Revered Master. I acted accordingly.

“A short while later, while returning home, the Revered Master came to the other person on the mound and initiated him. Seeing me on a mound nearby, he said, ‘Who is he?’ My friend replied. ‘Sir, some days ago he approached the Revered Master at the island and the Revered Master made a promise to him.’ The Revered Master said, ‘He who comes is accepted.’ Then he initiated me. On having received the sacred word (*guru-mantra*) I remained on the mound in my practice. The Revered Master had instructed others not to disturb me until I rose on my own.”

On finishing this narration the Master became silent, as if he had been stirred with emotion on reviving the old memories of his satguru, the Revered Master. An atmosphere of serene silence prevailed for some time, until someone asked a question.

Question: “Sir, is it necessary for everybody to have a guru?”

Master: “In the case of liberated souls—like Sri Rama and Sri Krishna—who are beyond the limitations of karma (actions) and are reincarnated for divine purposes, it may not be necessary to have a guru. Yet, for the sake of setting a right example for the common man, they too had their gurus. Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva had done so to set an example for others. When such has been the case with incarnations, it is certainly essential for people like us to have gurus. But everybody cannot do that, because only those who have yearning are drawn to a guru. Some are drawn to someone

and others are drawn to someone else, according to the destiny.”

Then the Master asked for the recitation of the hymn to the Absolute, which marked the end of the session that day. Some people left but some stayed back in the hall. It was dusk now. Benches and chairs were laid outside in the courtyard. The Master and the group took seats there. He was silent, and so was everybody else absorbed in his own way. The atmosphere was so serene that concentration was automatic. None uttered a word for about three quarters of an hour. As the weather became cold after the sunset, we all moved in. Turning to me the Master said, “Hope you are not returning home tonight.” I nodded and he was pleased.

By now, the local participants had left and only a few of us who had come from outstations stayed on. We were sitting around the Master in the hall. His eyes still radiated with ecstasy and divine glow. Everybody around him maintained strict silence. Suddenly his daughter broke the silence with the announcement that dinner was ready.

“Please serve all the guests first and then I will take food.” Hearing these words of the Master, we left for the residential barrack, had food hurriedly and returned to the hall.

“You have returned so soon,” he said to me. Turning to someone else, he asked, “What was served for dinner?” It was obvious that he fondly looked after everyone present there.

“Please make arrangements for their beds. Count the ladies and the gents.” Getting these instructions from the Master, a lady devotee said, “Sir, take dinner first and then we shall take care of beds.”

“As you please,” the Master replied. Food was brought in. His style of eating was charming and graceful. He took a few small morsels of rice with curry and milk. That was his usual evening diet. It was much less than what a child would take for a meal. He ate very slowly and gently.

Then curtains in the hall were dropped. The women were provided with beds on one side and the men on the other. The Master’s bed was laid in the center. He examined all the beds. If a bed was not laid neatly or smoothly, he set it right himself, or got it done by others. He valued beauty and order. If someone did not have linen for cover, he would say that the linen from his bed might be given to that person. It was obvious that the Master did not set aside anything exclusively for himself. He treated himself as one among others. Having ensured about everybody’s comfort, he retired to his bed. Lights were put out. It was 9 o’clock.

MEETING 3

SATGURU 2

SHANTI NAGAR *18 (night) and 19 October, 1952*

I do not get sleep when I change my bed. Here, too, I had this problem. I got up and saw a number of devotees sitting in meditation around the Master. It appeared that they had decided to remain awake the whole night. The Master was lying in the bed. Suddenly the clock chimed and the Master gently enquired about the time. A devotee replied, "Sir, it only eleven o'clock. Kindly have some more rest." Perhaps he had noticed that the Master was rising. Thereafter, I went to sleep for some time. But soon I was awakened by some movement in the hall. Peeping across the curtain, I noticed that the Master was not in his bed. Near the door, someone was holding a towel and a mug. As the Master came in, he helped him (the Master) to wash his face. The Master then took seat in his bed and sat down in meditation. It was thirty minutes past twelve. The lantern was put off, and everybody was sitting in meditation. I was surprised that I did not feel sleepy. A kind of magic had kept everybody awake. Perhaps, the radiations from the ever-awake eyes of the Master had influenced all of us and affected our eyes.

It was 3 o'clock and the lights were put on. The beds were rolled up and the rooms were made tidy. Some singers in the group started devotional music. At thirty minutes past three, the Master went to the residential barrack. On enquiry, I was told that it was his practice to go there at that time for morning duties, and take his breakfast at 4 o'clock. The music, however, continued uninterrupted. At 4 o'clock, tea was gently served to all without any disturbance. The music continued up to quarter to six. Throughout, the Master remained quiet.

As the music ended, some devotees started cleaning and setting the hall in order. If someone did not roll a bed neatly, the Master said with a smile, "Don't be a foe to beauty." The hall was set right quickly.

Breakfast was served at about 7 o'clock. The kitchen was managed by the Master's wife. No servants or volunteers had been engaged. Himself fond of service, the Master had trained all the members of the family.

When I returned to the hall after the breakfast, I found the Master surrounded by patients. He was attending to each one of them with love and

sympathy. Some were discussing personal problems. Here, some one in the group said, “Sir, some questions have been agitating my mind since yesterday. Won’t you please help clear my doubts?”

Master: “Please put all your questions and doubts before the group (*sangat*).”

Question: “Sir, during the recitation from ‘Guruvani’ yesterday, we noted that importance of guru was highly stressed. But it is also recorded in the scriptures *gurudeva mata*, *gurudeva pita* (mother guru, father guru). If the parents are gurus, is it then necessary to seek initiation under some other guru? Don’t the parents serve the purpose?”

Master: “As long as a jiva has not accepted a guru, until then the parents are his gurus, and he must obey them. If he happens to be lucky, and the parents are spiritually advanced, he may accept them as his gurus. But all parents are not spiritually advanced and they cannot play the role of a guru. Parents may play the role of a guru in a limited manner up to a certain stage. For spiritual advancement, however, a jiva must seek an external guru. A jiva is supposed to have assumed a new birth when he is initiated by a guru and then the guru becomes his parent. Henceforth, the satguru assumes the role of the parents, and the seeker must obey him with the utmost devotion. Thereafter, should the instructions or orders of the parents happen to be contrary to those of the guru, especially in the realm of spiritualism, the jiva is supposed to follow his guru. He earns no blame or sin for disregarding his parents, because, henceforth, his guru is truly his parent.”

Question: “Sir, it has been recorded in the scriptures that for a married woman, her husband is like God or a guru. Must she also seek another guru?”

Master: “It is true that it has been recorded in the scriptures that to a married woman her husband is God, and she can attain everything by serving him. But nowhere the scriptures have forbidden a woman to seek a guru. If at all it has been so ordained, that pertained to the people in the bygone days when spiritualism was practised in almost every home. Nowadays, the situation is very different. In the present time, however, it is unavoidable for women to seek external gurus. We know that in the olden times there were cases of women who followed their husbands as their gurus. There had also been cases of men, as far instance Sikhidhwaja, who got initiation under their wives. Today when men do not know what spiritual progress is, how can they be expected to help their wives?

“What should be the answer in the case of an unmarried girl? If her parents

are not spiritually advanced, must she allow her life to be wasted? A jiva must obtain a precept from wherever he can. The spiritual path covers various stages. A woman seeking initiation under her husband may practise concentration on his form. This marks the first step on the path. Who will then guide her on the subsequent stages where she has to seek merger in the sacred word and its spirit? The husband is not adept in these matters; he does not understand the Truth nor has he realised the Truth. So, she must seek some other guru who has himself realised the Truth and can lead her to the goal.”

Question: “Sir, can’t one follow a scripture as a guru?”

Master: “It may be assumed that a seeker follows a scripture as a guru. The words of the scriptures are highly potent. But only he who fully abides by the instructions of a scripture can adopt the scripture as a guru. For example, it has been ordained in the scriptures that beyond a certain age, a jiva must not stay in his family. But who follows that? If a jiva moulds his life according to the injunctions of a scripture, he may adopt the scripture as a guru. Nevertheless, it is a fact that a jiva benefits from his guru; he gets deliverance only under an embodied guru.”

Question: “Sir, the scriptures contain everything. Why not follow a scripture as a guru? Kindly elucidate this point.”

Master: “It is true that the scriptures contain everything. To a certain extent, a jiva can obtain the insight from the scriptures, unaided by an embodied guru. But it has generally been observed that jivas encounter various kinds of difficulties at the different stages on the spiritual path. For example, an explorer surveying the countryside with the aid of a map may suddenly encounter heavy rainfall due to which the landmarks are either inundated or washed out. Beyond a certain point he cannot proceed with the help of the map and then he realises the need for a guide who is thoroughly familiar with the land and has himself traversed the path. Likewise, a jiva needs the help of an embodied guru. Just as a map is helpful to an explorer up to a certain point only, so the scriptures are helpful only up to a certain stage. Only a living guru can guide a jiva through difficult stages or perplexing situations. The hidden meanings or mystic elements underlying the words in the scriptures cannot be revealed without the help of an embodied guru. The scriptures cannot discharge this function, as they are mute associates. They can help only in elucidating what the guru teaches and not beyond that.”

A call for lunch was given and all proceeded there. In the meantime

curtains in the hall were dropped and it was made ready for the afternoon rest. Since I had not slept during the night, I went to sleep as soon as I lay down.

Everybody in the hall was up by 3 o'clock and preparations started for the afternoon satsang. The well-known Hindu scripture Sri Yoga Vasishtha was taken out for reading.

Master (*addressing an elderly man*): "Shall we start satsang?"

Elderly man: "Sir, may we have a discussion session today? This will give us an opportunity to get our doubts in regard to what we have heard during the past one week cleared up."

Master: "Please come out with your questions with an open mind and let the group react and help in finding solutions to the questions."

Question: "Sir, it has been laid down in Guruvani that one must seek a perfect master who alone can lead to salvation. How can a jiva ascertain who a perfect master is?"

The master looked at the group and asked who would reply. As none came forward, he addressed the group.

Master: "This is a good question indeed! The mind of a perfect master, like a fountain, spouts through his glances giving soothing effect to the mind of the audience and brings bliss to them. A jiva experiences an unusual flow of energy within and there is a transformation in his thought processes. This is the chief characteristic of a perfect master (*poorn satguru*). Such a master is all-powerful. Since he has realised the true self, he has direct experience of the Truth. A jiva benefits under such guru."

Question: "Sir, only a lucky person may get such a guru, and this may not be so in the lot of everybody. What should one do if one is not able to get a perfect master? Must he abandon hope?"

Master: "Should we give up hope in the Almighty? There is none like Him whose shelter we may seek. Until one meets a perfect master one must follow the guru available according to one's destiny, like a chaste and devoted wife who is faithful to the man she is married to. A seeker must treat his guru like God. If the guru happens to be a perfect master, that is wonderful. Nevertheless, one's own attitude acts as a powerful force. Instances are not wanting where seekers have not benefited even under perfect masters. Eventually, it is one's attitude that triumphs. Some have realised God in stones, and others have treated God as a trifle and derived no benefit even under realised souls. As is the attitude, so is the realisation. Whatever be the

status of the satguru, a jiva benefits according to his faith or attitude., Only faith leads him to realisation. In the absence of faith a devotee can gain nothing from a sage, no matter whether the sage is of a very high status. But in case his faith is unshakable, the seeker is benefited some way or the other, even if the guru is not perfect.”

Question: “Sir, you have said that a seeker must accept his preceptor as God. Can a man be God?”

Master: “Man is divine; he has only to realise that. If on the path of devotion a seeker treats his satguru only as a saint or a preceptor, it must be assumed that he has yet to commence his journey. But when he treats his guru as God, he is said to have begun his journey. All saints bear testimony to the fact that a jiva benefits only in such cases. To a seeker, his guru is everything, and glorification of the guru to any extent is inadequate. This must be the attitude of a seeker; only this is helpful but up to a certain point, as long as he is on the path of devotion, and not thereafter. It is said that when someone told Majnu that the Lord had called him, Majnu replied, ‘I am aware of Laila¹ only and if your God is interested in meeting me, let him present himself before me in the form of Laila.’ A lover always thinks of his beloved as God. Otherwise, God is omnipresent and pervades everything. When a lover (seeker) crosses this stage he perceives unity in diversity and sees everything as an aspect of God. A saint has said:

¹ The name of Majnu’s beloved. ‘Laila and Majnu’ is the famous love episode of the Middle East as is ‘Romeo and Juliet’ of the West.

*Adam ko khuda mat kaho
Adam khuda nahin
Lekin khuda ke noor se
Adam juda nahin.”*

(Explanation: Do not call a man God, because he is not God. Yet man is not distinct from His Light, or he is an aspect of God.)

Question: “Sir, should an aspirant seek another guru when his guru leaves the mortal frame?”

Master: “That depends upon the aspirant. In case he has firm faith in and intense devotion for his guru, and is firmly established on the spiritual path, it

is not necessary for him to seek another guru. Even if the guru were not in a physical frame, he can help the disciple spiritually. But in case the aspirant is not firm in his faith and devotion, he may seek another guru so that his life is not wasted.”

Question: “Sir, does this imply that a seeker must think of his guru as ever-living, no matter whether the guru is in a body or not?”

Master: “Yes, the guru exists in three forms or states: First, the gross state in which a seeker sees the guru and serves him. The other is the aural form. When a guru abandons the gross form, the seeker has to constantly follow the *mantra* (the sacred word) and practice *japa* in all states of work and rest so that he might get closer to his guru and attain his goal. The third state is the latent meaning of the *mantra*. When a seeker faithfully adheres to the injunctions of his guru and totally merges his self or ego in the import and spirit of the *mantra*, he is said to be serving the guru in the third form. Then he realises the subtle form which is immortal. The guru is immortal and ever-living. A seeker must cultivate this attitude.”

Question: “Sir, is the relationship of a guru and a disciple limited to the present birth, or does it extend into the future births? Does a guru seek rebirths for the sake of his disciple until the disciple attains the ultimate goal?”

Master: “Yes, a guru seeks rebirths for his disciple. But why should one worry about it? Isn’t the guru alive when he is not in a mortal frame? A guru must have had a guru, and the latter must have had a guru, and so on. Ultimately, we reach the Absolute—the guru of all.

“When it is asked, who rules a kingdom, the reply is that the king does. Likewise it is one Lord who rules over the universe and takes care of the entire creation. To a disciple in his present birth, the satguru is like a commissioned officer of God. The Absolute is beyond forms and words, whereas the devotee exists in a physical form. It is a law of nature that only the like merges into the like. An aspirant can be united with the Subtle only when he attains to the subtle stage. Being influenced by the devotion and earnestness of the aspirants, the Lord commissions His missionaries by putting them in the gross state so that they may guide, on His behalf, His devotees living on the physical plane. Thus, a guru is an agent of the Lord. He directs the devotees, on His behalf, on the spiritual path so that on attaining subtlety the devotees may merge with the Absolute.”

We were so much absorbed in the discussion that we were not aware of

time. Suddenly looking at the clock, the Master suggested that the hymn to the Absolute might be recited. This was recited in chorus and this marked the end of the satsang. We sought his permission to leave and he blessed us very affectionately.

Sitting in the train, I reflected upon my short stay with the Master. I was reminded of the couplet from Sant Kabir:

*Grahst men jo rahe udas
Kabir kahe main ta ko das*

(Explanation: Kabir is a slave to him who practises true renunciation in married life.)

By the grace of God, I had met a sage who enjoyed liberation while living within mundane bonds. Indeed, they are men in the true sense, who lead such a life and whose mind constantly dwells upon the Lord and who enjoy liberation while apparently leading a mundane life. The material bonds cannot check the spiritual fervour and devotion of saints.

Look at his hospitality! He has set a brilliant example by demonstrating how a householder should serve and love his guests. By his every action he demonstrated that spiritualism (*fakiri*) means a way of functioning and living. How humble, polite and affectionate he was to everyone! To me, a meeting with a sage like him was a matter of immense luck.

My companion on the train had known the Master for a long time. To know more from him, I said, "The Master sleeps very little and he should not do that at this age."

With a gentle smile he said, "He is fully refreshed with the little rest he takes. There have been occasions when he had slept hardly for thirty minutes during twenty-four hours, and yet after that sleep he looked as fresh as ever." This confirmed my conviction that the Master was adept in sleeplessness.

"He takes breakfast very early," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "right from the early days in Sind it has been his practice to get up very early in the morning and visit the patients in their homes, specially those who were unable to come to the dispensary. Also, to enhance devotion among his friends etc he would visit them in the early hours and talk to them on spiritual subjects and then come to his dispensary. None can match him in selfless and loving care of the sick. In addition, his hospitality can hardly be described."

Soon the train arrived at Bombay V.T. station. Bidding good-bye to each other, we left for our homes.

MEETING 4

SELF SURRENDER

(Sharan)

BARODA 2 November, 1952

In response to the pressing and repeated requests by the *sangat* in Baroda, the Master had consented to go there. Accompanied by six of us, he stayed there with a devotee.

It was morning. The Master was sitting in an easy chair, reading a newspaper. We were sitting around him on a mattress on the floor. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. The Master said, "Please see if it is a postman." One of us went up to the door. A postman was there with some letters for the Master. Reading a letter, the Master suddenly turned very grave and his eyes looked tearful. One of us who could not contain himself, said very politely, "Sir, I hope all is well." The Master passed on the letter to us. It contained a pathetic tale of woe of one of his dear friends who was passing through serious financial crisis. We returned the letter to the Master. The Master said, "Did you read the letter? The Lord is very independent (*bepervah*). Just recall the affluence of this family in Sind a few years back and now see their pitiable state at present. What a great contrast! May Lord forgive us. But one must have a firm conviction that what is ordained by the Lord is flawless. Whatever be His will, that is in the best interest of man. Man comes to realise this eventually in due course. May God grant them strength so that seeking His shelter, they may face their problems with courage and fortitude. Presently, I feel concerned about them."

Rising from the chair, the Master went to his bed and said, "I would like to rest for a while."

The weather was chilly. I took a light woolen shawl and spread it over him. He immediately pulled it up and covered his face. Perhaps he wanted to conceal his watery eyes; he never believed in display. He had affection and compassion for all, but would not make a display of that. He was a man of the highest self-realisation, and financial loss was just a trifle to him. He loved poverty and suffering, yet he could not withstand the sufferings of

others.

He had rested hardly for 15 to 20 minutes when a group of singers from Ahmedabad arrived there. Hearing the noise, the Master got up and asked that they be brought in. After enquiring about their well-being, he said to them, “Please sing a song that may bring solace to the heart.” They sang this song:

*Usi rang men rahana re bande,
Usi rang men rahana,
Jis rang men Parameshwar rakhe,
Ushi rang men rahana.
Voh chahe to bhikh mangale,
Voh chahe to takht bithade,
Mukh se kuch na kahana re bande,
Usi rang men rahana
Sukh awe to phool na jana,
Dukh awe to nahin ghabrana,
Hansi khushi dukh sahana re bande,
Usi rang men rahana
Bhagwant ko tum meet banale,
Swas ko apna geet banale,
Yehi jivan hai gahana re bande,
Usi rang men rahana
(Live in that state, O man!
Live in that state,
The state that Lord ordains,
Live in that state.
You may be a beggar if He wills,
Or be a king if He wills,
Do not grumble, O man!
Live in that state, O man!
Bear no pride when fortune favours,
Bear no sorrow when misfortune comes,
Cheerfully bear all the sufferings,
Live in that state, O man!
Let God be your companion,
Let breath be the rhythm,*

This is the way to live,
Live in that state, O man!)

Master (*addressing singers*): “Very good! You selected a song to my liking. (*addressing us*) Please see how the benign Lord has sent to us, through them, a very appropriate message in reply to the letter. Only he, who has totally surrendered himself to the Lord and is firm in self-surrender, can accept His will happily. None else can do that. Self-surrender is wonderful. Nothing can be more helpful than the attitude of self-surrender. Otherwise, anxiety is nerve-breaking and then physical ailments follow. One must surrender oneself to one’s satguru and consign all cares to him. Let the satguru be his elder and he himself his child. When a bond of this nature is established, one becomes free from much botheration. One feels relieved.”

A singer: “Sir, there are repeated references in Guru Granth Sahib glorifying self-surrender.”

Master: “Yes. Those who are on the path of love and devotion highly praise self-surrender. Lovers totally entrust themselves to the Beloved and are concerned only with the success of their love. In Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, too, Lord Krishna immensely praises self-surrender. He says, ‘O Arjuna! If all other paths appear difficult to you, adopt this one. Surrender yourself unto Me. Whatever you do, do it for Me and for My sake.’ When a jiva adopts this approach, he earns the supreme good. Satgurus also suggest such methods to the seekers as help in the annihilation of ego and in the enjoyment of bliss. But a guru (preceptor) would not reveal the methods to a seeker unless the seeker accepts the guru whole-heartedly and without any reservations and surrenders himself to the guru. The implication of surrender is to accept the guru as all-in-all and one’s own self as nothing. One should accept oneself as a disciple and a follower, and the guru as the master. How can one earn the grace of the guru unless one cultivates this attitude? Surrender precedes guidance. Since this is the rule in the case of teachers and institutions in the mundane world, this, too, must be the case in the spiritual realm.”

Question: “Sir, ordinarily, what students in schools and colleges do is that they listen to their teachers and try to remember what the teachers tell them. What is the implication of surrender on the spiritual path? Is it that one has to remember the words of the guru, or is there something more than that?”

Master: “It is far more than that. It is not merely hearing and remembering the words; there, one has to practise and truly live the life of self-surrender. It

is only when a seeker loses his own self and fully establishes the supremacy of the Beloved, that he can hope for some gains. On this path, one has to barter with one's head. The head has to be surrendered to the master or the preceptor. Once the head belongs to the satguru, then the satguru may conduct it as he wills. A seeker must firmly realise that he has surrendered his head to his master and, henceforth, the master owns it."

Question: "Sir, many sages, for example, Sai Dalpatrai and Hazrat Qutab Ali Shah have stressed the surrendering of the head by the seeker. What is the purport of the surrendering of the head? Does one have to cut off one's head and present it to the satguru? How does a satguru benefit by a head made of skin, blood and bones?"

Master: "Yes, you speak rightly. Why should a satguru need a head? This is the path of the heart. Here, one does not need to cut off one's head with a knife and present it to the satguru. It has to be surrendered emotionally and intellectually through thought processes and actual living. What does a head contain? It includes the eyes, ears and tongue. When these are presented, it establishes the surrender of the head to the satguru. After the head has been presented to the satguru, he gracefully gives it back as a trust to the seeker. The seeker is asked to realise that, henceforth, the head is the property of the preceptor and that it has been given back as a trust to the seeker, to be used with due respect and care. The eyes, the ears and the tongue in the head do not belong to the seeker any more, but they belong to the satguru and must be used thoughtfully and respectfully. If a seeker is able to do so, he is said to have truly succeeded."

Question: "Sir, you say that the eyes, the ears and the tongue have to be used with respect and care. Could you kindly explain this clearly?"

Master: "These senses which had remained uncontrolled hitherto, have now to be brought under control and have to be used for the purpose assigned by the master. The eyes that had got used to seeing the faults of others, have now to see nothing but the form of the satguru. One has to concentrate on that form; it has to remain fixed within. The ears must not hear unwanted materials and ill of others. Instead, they must be used for listening to spiritual discussions, devotional music and satsang so that a change is brought about in attitude and outlook. Likewise, the tongue that had been habituated to talking useless matters and ill of others has to be closed within the shutters of the two lips, and it has to be trained in silence so that the seeker can meditate and introspect."

Question: “Sir, why is the head, among all parts of body, assigned so much importance?”

Master: “The head is the crown of the body; it is the ruler of the body-kingdom. When the king surrenders, the subjects too are supposed to have surrendered. No part of a body can function without the head. When a jiva surrenders his head, it implies that he has totally surrendered his self, including hands, feet, torso, heart, mind, intelligence and ego. Then all belong to the satguru.

“Here, I am reminded of an anecdote related to King Janaka. King Janaka was a renowned king. He was a *gyani*—a man with true knowledge. Even though he was engaged in actions, he was beyond actions (*akarmi*). He realised that a good deal of his life had been spent and he had done nothing. Thinking that it is better late than never, he decided that he must not delay any more. He announced through his heralds that anybody, who helped him to attain gyan within the interval he turned his other foot on the horse back and placed it in the stirrup, would receive a very handsome reward. But he who having accepted the challenge, failed to achieve the task would be put behind the bars. The reward announced was very attractive and, thus, many brahmins and *rishis* came forward. But all failed and were, therefore, sent to the prison. Among them was a brahmin whose wife was carrying a child when he was sentenced. A child was born during the absence of his father. He was very ugly. He had eight bends in his body and was, therefore, given the name Ashtavakra (with eight bends). When the child grew up, he was taunted by his peers that he had been born during the absence of his father. He learnt from his mother about what had happened to his father. The enraged child took a vow to avenge his father’s punishment and seek his release. In due course the child attained gyan and then he approached the king in his palace. Seeing his tender age and ugly appearance the sentries at the palace gate would not allow him to enter. But when the king, who was eager and restless to attain gyan, heard about the arrival of someone, he ordered the child to be brought in. Knowing that he was a brahmin child, the king received him with due respect and offered him a seat by his side. But the courtiers, seeing his ugly appearance, made unpleasant gestures. Seeing this, Ashtavakra said, ‘O king, rightly you could not attain gyan hitherto. No wise person shall reveal the subtle and divine truth while you are surrounded by unwise ministers and courtiers. The minds of all the courtiers are fixed on the gross body. Never mind, you may now call for a horse.’

“A horse was brought in. Ashtavakra asked the king to mount. The king put his one foot on the stirrup and was about to turn his other foot over the horse when Ashtavakra asked, ‘O king, in what capacity do you wish to receive gyan from me?’ ‘You are my guru’, replied the king. Then Ashtavakra asked, ‘Where is my *guru dakshina*¹?’ The king handed over the keys of the treasury to him. No sooner had the king handed over the keys than a beggar appeared before the king and asked for alms. The king signalled the treasurer to give something to the beggar. Intervening, Ashtavakra asked the king how he could order a payment without his permission, since the keys had been handed over to him (Ashtavakra). As Ashtavakra put this question, the king had the realisation. He understood that on this path one has to surrender fully—physically as well as mentally—and one has to lose one’s being totally. Everything has to be surrendered at the feet of the satguru.

1 oblation made by a disciple to his guru

“Thus the king attained gyan. Abandoning the self, he realised the Self. The brahmins and the rishis who had been imprisoned were respectfully sent home.

“King Janaka was a gyani. He maintained himself well on both the sides—material and spiritual. He could not attain to this state until after he had fully surrendered himself to his satguru.”

Question: “Sir, doesn’t this indicate that King Janaka had very sharp intelligence so that he could instantly realise the purport of surrender? To him, surrendering the keys symbolised his own surrender.”

Master: “Yes, he was a pious king and possessed very sharp understanding. He had performed many a *japa* and *tapa* (penance). His mind was greatly purified. He was ready and could realise through a pointer that on this path one has to surrender totally—physically as well as mentally. One has to surrender everything that one loves or owns—wealth, pleasure, comfort, fame etc. Only when one does this, one can aspire for divine treasures, not otherwise. A seeker must always be on the march, like a horse who asks its master no questions about where to go or what the fare should be but moves on as it is directed. So also, a seeker must assign his reins to the hands of his satguru. Just as a horse-man takes care of his horse after the day’s toil, so a

preceptor takes care of the seeker.”

Question: “Sir, what would remain with a seeker after he has surrendered? Nothing, it seems.”

Master: “Yes, you are right. It is the path of negation. Here, one has to come to nought. One has to lose one’s being or the ego. One has to consider oneself a non-entity and assign credit for every happening to his beloved, the master.

“A jiva is used to assuming himself an entity. He thinks that he is something, that he is learned, wealthy, a father or an important person. Let him once try to be small and then see how well he is looked after by his satguru. Let him consider that he is small like an ant, or that he is a child or that he is an agent.”

Question: “Sir, how does one benefit if one considers oneself small like an ant?”

Master: “Let us take an example. In a mixture of sand and sugar, it is difficult to sift one from the other. But it is not difficult for an ant to do it. Being itself tiny, it can easily perform minute tasks. Likewise, one who has attained to the subtle state can reach anywhere. A big jiva, or the one who has the spirit of the gross, cannot undertake subtle tasks. An ant can reach distant places merely by getting into the pocket of a traveller. It can do this only after it puts itself under a traveller. Likewise, when on attaining subtlety a jiva surrenders himself to his guru, then the guru takes him to distant lands, the lands that are spiritual and divine. This can be attained by a jiva only when he realises himself to be tiny like an ant.”

Question: “Sir, an ant may reach distant places, but what can a seeker achieve if he considers himself to be a child?”

Master: “Even then he will be benefited. If he considers himself to be a child, God looks after him in every way.

“A child who feels independent may, while walking, hold the finger of his elder. On stumbling against something, he may lose the grip and fall down. But in case his elder has firmly held him, he would not tumble down and would be saved. This is possible when a jiva considers himself to be a child and puts himself under someone.

“Let us take another example of a child visiting a fair. There are tall persons in front of him, so he cannot see much. But when someone, out of compassion, lifts him and puts him on his shoulders, the child sees a lot of fun. Likewise, when a seeker considers himself small like a child, then the satguru may show his grace and condone all exercises or practices from the

feet to the shoulders; and then the exercises of the head only remain to be practised.

“A jiva may also be benefited if he considers himself to be an agent. Everything belongs to the Lord, but we assume it to be ours. Whatever a jiva may do or earn, let him assume that all his actions and earnings belong to the satguru. Let everything be done either for the satguru or on his behalf. When someone asks for anything, let him give it away in the name of the Lord, without considering who has asked for it. Let him not bring his ego in what he does. He must forget everything.”

A devotee: “Sir, by and large, people come to saints for the fulfilment of their material desires and not for spiritual progress.”

Master: “Yes. Jivas of two types seek shelter under saints. The first category includes those who come to saints to seek grace for the fulfilment of their material desires. The other category includes those who want spiritual guidance and have no other desire. A saint accepts both and grants his grace to them. In the case of first category, he grants them occult potencies that help them fulfil their desires. In the case of the other group, he guides them to quiescence and salvation. He explains to them the steps and pre-requisites for spiritual progress, namely, service, contentment, yearning and devotion.”

Question: “Sir, you have stressed surrender very much. But how to be firm in self-surrender?”

Master: “Surrender means loss of ego or individual identity. When a seeker comes to his satguru and bows to him, he is supposed to have surrendered himself totally. Thereafter, the seeker must not consider his head as his own. He must faithfully follow the instructions of the satguru and bid goodbye for ever to his intelligence and cleverness. That marks the surrender. A jiva can be stable in surrender when he becomes humble and serves everyone with sincerity and humility. All his actions must be credited to the satguru. Thus, ego will not arise in him. This is the easiest way to learn surrender (*sharan*). He will gradually become firm in his attitude. One’s duty is to practise according to the precept of the satguru. The success and failure in the endeavour may be assigned to the beloved who takes care of everything.”

MEETING 5

HOLY WORD

(Shabd, Japa, Zikar)

SHANTI NAGAR 9 November, 1952

Gradually, the satsang with the Master became increasingly pleasing and dear and all other activities seemed uninteresting to me. No longer could I enjoy my usual pastime going to movies or to the clubs. I was always eager to go to the Master and attend the satsang. It was a holiday today, so I went to Shanti Nagar. As I entered the hall, I found the Master surrounded by devotees. Devotional singing was going on. Everybody appeared absorbed and in a blissful state. The hymns selected described the path of love and devotion. One of the hymns was by the Revered Master, Sai Qutab Ali Shah. It said:

You claim to be a seeker,
Yet you forget the Truth.
Abandon all ideas of the dual,
Arise and drink the cup of ardour,
Remain eager and absorbed,
Fulfil your primeval divine promise.
Dive deep to the bottom,
Discover the priceless treasure,
Search the mine on your left,
And fix your mind ever there.
Remember O Qutab! all is illusory,
And, ultimately perishable,
Allow not your urge to wane,
Allow not your love to fade.

As the hymn ended, the Master addressed the gathering.

Master: “The Revered Master is reminding us of the primeval promise—the promise that a jiva makes to God before birth while he (jiva) is still in the mother’s womb which is of the nature of a deadly hell. The jiva prays to God

and promises, 'O Lord, deliver me from this hell and I promise to worship You.' In return the Lord, too, promises, 'It shall be My job to provide you with bread as long as the breath lasts in you.' Coming out of the womb, the jiva utters '*aum aum aum.*' To others it appears that he is crying. Soon he finds himself surrounded by so many people and this confounds him. Some say, 'O my son,' 'O my grandson,' 'O my brother.' Some try to promote body-awareness in him by appreciating his body, caressing and kissing, etc. Continually hearing all these things, he forgets his primeval promise. It is the duty of the mother, more than that of the father, to remind him of the primeval promise. If he is lucky, he may have such a mother, or when he grows up he may join satsang (holy company) and be reminded of his primeval divine promise. He then seeks a guru and follows him. Otherwise, nothing good happens.

"When a seeker comes to his satguru, the satguru picks up the essence or the gist of the scriptures—the basic word (*tattva, shabd*), the master key—and hands it to him so that he (the seeker) might unlock his heart and discover the blissful treasure within. He also teaches him how to use the key and unlock the heart. The guru tells him the method."

A young university student who was a new comer in the group and had been listening to the discourse with rapt attention, asked a question.

Question: "Sir, all sacred words (*shabd*), methods and techniques have been recorded in scriptures. Aren't they adequate? Can't a seeker unlock his heart by following these? If it is so, why then should one need a guru?"

Master: "It is true that everything is contained in scriptures and some techniques have also been explained there, but all techniques have not been explained in scriptures because some techniques cannot be explained in writing; these can only be explained in person to a seeker by a living guru. For example, books are prescribed for the various grades in schools and colleges and students are required to study them. Though everything is recorded in the books, yet teachers are needed. There must be something wanting in the books because of which teachers are needed. The letters A, B, C, D, etc are printed on the pages, but the books do not contain the pronunciations. How does a child learn to pronounce letters? It is only through demonstration by a teacher. Likewise, there can be many more examples. If a teacher is needed for learning the secular matter, it is all the more necessary in the case of spiritual knowledge which is highly subtle. Besides this, the grace of the master is very necessary for spiritual learning.

Without the grace of the satguru, a jiva cannot progress, not even a step; and books do not contain grace. Only a living guru can grant that. The grace cannot be earned without accepting a guru. Remember: there is no salvation without a guru.”

The Master then became silent and the singers started singing. They sang about six songs. The last stanza was:

Keeping *sukhun* of satguru with them,
They practice *suriti* in their heads.

Here, someone asked a question.

Question: “Sir, what is implied by the word *sukhun*?”

Master: “It is the holy word received from the satguru. It means the *shabd*, *japa* or *zikar*.”

Question: “Sir, does a preceptor give the same word for *japa* to every disciple, or is there any variation?”

Master: “How can there be a common word for everybody? For example, in a hospital, different medicines are prescribed for different patients according to the nature of the disease. Here, too, a guru grants the *word* for the removal of the deficiencies in a seeker for his spiritual progress. Everyone has his own deficiencies; hence different words (*shabd*) are prescribed. There are three types of seekers who approach a guru: those who are established in *sattva*, those who are established in *rajas*, and those who are established in *tamas*. Therefore, there cannot be a common word (*shabd*).”

A devotee: “Sir, I am reminded of an anecdote from Nanak Prakash¹ illustrating how the guru, by his grace, helps in the removal of the deficiencies in a disciple.”

¹ Biographies of the Gurus

Master: “Please narrate it to the group.”

The devotee: “Guru Gobind Singh had a disciple (Sikh) who was adept in horse-keeping. Guruji asked him to look after his horses. The Sikh, however, put a condition: Guruji would teach him one stanza of the scripture Sri Japaji every day. He put this condition because on an earlier occasion he had heard Guruji saying that if one recites (or studies) Sri Japaji every day, all one’s

sufferings would vanish. Being illiterate and unable to read, the Sikh made good of this opportunity to learn it from Guruji. The condition was readily accepted by Guruji and he taught the Sikh a stanza every day. One day it so happened that while Guruji was ready to go out for some important work, the Sikh came there for the day's lesson. Guruji said, '*Bahela, tera waqt no wela*' (O! ignorant, you cannot see the time or opportunity). The Sikh, however, could not follow the purport of what Guruji had said. Assuming that it was a line in the text, he continued to recite it as a part of the text.

"When Guruji returned home after some days, he asked the Sikh to recite Japaji to him. When the Sikh repeated that line, Guruji asked him how it came there. The Sikh replied that on that day when Guruji was to go out and he had requested for the day's lesson, Guruji had told him that line. Guruji laughed heartily and blessed him thus: 'You have many weaknesses, but we shall relieve you of all these. Henceforth, you may study no more'."

Master: "Yes, that illustrates the grace of satguru. Books do not contain that. Guruji had prescribed the recitation and study of Sri Japaji to help remove the deficiencies of the Sikh. By his grace, however, he did everything. Only a living guru can do that."

Question: "Sir, the hymn says, 'Keeping with him the word of the satguru, the seeker practices *suriti* in his head.' What is *suriti*?"

Master: "It has two or three connotations. Here you may take the general meaning. It refers to fixed concentration without any disturbance, or meditation without any other ideation. The word (*shabd*) given by satguru has to be practiced (*japa*) with fixed concentration."

Question: "Sir, does a seeker gain anything if he mechanically recites the word (*shabd*), like a parrot, without concentration?"

Master: "The *shabd* (the holy word) is like a husband and *suriti* (concentration) is like a woman. When the thought process is purified, the union between the holy word (*shabd*) and concentration (*suriti*) occurs. Out of this union is born the child called Bliss. Parrot-like recitation will not result in as much benefit as practice with concentration does. Yet, something is better than nothing."

Question: "Sir, I am reminded of a story where a seeker forgot the word and instead of reciting 'Rama, Rama', he recited 'Mara, mara', and yet he benefited. How could that happen?"

Master: "More important than the *word* are the meaning and the attitude. It is only the *vritti* (disposition), developed by imbibing the meaning or the

purport, that eventually triumphs.”

Question: “Sir, what is *vritti* (disposition)? Kindly elucidate.”

Master: “*Vritti* is the thought process, or attitude, or interpretation or coloring. Whatever a jiva may hear, he interprets it and benefits by it according to his *vritti* (disposition) and the development of his thought process. In this case, the jiva recited an insignificant word ‘Mara, Mara’ instead of ‘Rama, Rama’, and yet he benefited, because he had maintained a good attitude or spirit. *Vritti* is the operative force in all the cases. To give an analogy, *vritti* may be compared to a pair of binoculars. You look through the binoculars from one end, and the distant objects appear near to you, but when you turn it around and see through the other end, the nearby objects appear distant to you. Some jivas may interpret a word in its gross form and derive an insignificant meaning, others may interpret the same word in a subtle manner which helps in further evolution of their thought processes. All depends upon one’s own self. As is the disposition, so is the creation. *Vritti* always triumphs.”

Question: “Sir, can *vritti* be effective in the absence of faith?”

Master: “Faith precedes *vritti*. *Vritti* evolves out of faith. Firm faith is a prerequisite on this path; it is the fundamental point. It is the right disposition (*shubh vritti*) developing from faith that promotes the progress of a jiva. How can the right attitude develop in the absence of faith? Further, practice is ineffective in the absence of faith. A jiva who has no faith in his satguru will not have the right spirit towards the precept or the words of the satguru. Whatever a jiva may do—be it surrender, hard penance, renunciation of wealth and fame etc—he earns nothing if he is wanting in absolute faith.”

Question: “Sir, jivas have intellect. Which is more important, intellect or faith?”

Master: “In all cases, faith is more important than intellect. In the absence of faith, a jiva cannot practice according to the precept of the satguru; he cannot progress.”

Question: “Sir, nowadays, jivas are strongly dominated by intellect and so they demand evidence or proof before accepting anything. How can such jivas who treat intellect as more important than faith, progress (spiritually)?”

Master: “There can be two approaches. First, to depend exclusively on one’s intellect and not to trust anyone else and to prove everything by oneself. Second, to have faith in some others—the seniors who have realized the Truth, and who, on having traversed the path, have come to inform those

whom they love. Those who maintain faith, save a lot of time and breath. They are relieved of many troubles and they attain the goal easily and quickly. They not only realize the beloved, but also attain the Self.

“In the realm of science, men accept the findings and discoveries of scientists, and thus they are relieved of numerous troubles and are able to save considerable time. The spiritual path is subtle, mysterious and full of unknown wonders. If a jiva were to discover or prove everything by himself, he will have to waste a considerable time and will be subject to many errors. In the remote past, jivas had a very long life-span, stretching out to thousands of years. One could then afford to discover and prove by himself. In the event of an error, one had the time for corrections. Who has so much time now? The life-span is very short. Therefore, one must not waste time after *anatma* (the unreal)?

“O! jiva, if you have faith in your seniors and truly accept what they tell you, you will save a lot of time. Or else, you will have to take many births to realise the *word*. A jiva has to realise the entire truth in *one word* only. If you keep faith in the precept and sincerely pursue the assigned *word* you will realise everything in it.”

Question: “Sir, is just one word or one path suggested by a satguru to a disciple from the beginning to the end, or are changes made in them periodically?”

Master: “A jiva is recommended a path according to his past actions (*karma*) and destiny (*prarabdha*). When he traverses a path or crosses a stage, he is directed to the next stage of the path or of the practice. In certain cases, however, no change is made in the *word*, depending upon the state of the seeker. The preceptor first reviews the progress made by the seeker in his previous births and decides about the path to be followed by him in the present birth, and accordingly grants to the seeker the *word* (*shabd*) and directs him forward. Generally, when pranayama is prescribed, the same word is assigned from the beginning to the end. The preceptor first studies the behaviour, the mode of expression and the interests of the seeker and accordingly grants him the *word*.

“It is likely that the seeker may experience fatigue in his practice. In such cases, the benevolent and gracious satguru mercifully suggests one or two alternative modes of practice with the instructions that in case of fatigue arising in a practice, or in case of his inability to concentrate in that practice, the seeker may follow the alternative practice which is easier and lighter. In

any case, the seeker must always be busy in one practice or the other; he must not waste his time. He may alternate his practice according to his convenience, but must sustain his interest. He must have interest in nothing except his practice. He must be fully absorbed in the precept of his master. Anything short of that is merely a pastime and it does not lead to progress.

“I am reminded of my own times. Hardly a few months had passed after my initiation, when plague broke out in Hyderabad and the Revered Master had to shift with his family to a forest a few miles across the river. At that time, my cousin and I were staying in a guest house in Hyderabad. Owing to the epidemic, all the servants and attendants left and, therefore, the work of the guest house was divided up among the inmates. My cousin and I were assigned two duties: to fill the water pots and to light a fire in the kitchen. We both would finish the assigned duties well before the sunset and then run to the Revered Master’s new abode, which was eight miles from the guest house. After running about four miles, we would have a rest for a few minutes at the bridge, and start running again. We would arrive in the presence of the Revered Master by the dusk. He would affectionately receive us saying, ‘I had been looking for you.’ After spending the night there, we would start the return journey shortly before dawn. Running fast we would reach the guest house before the other inmates had got up and would then attend to our assigned duties. We would spend the day in studies at the college and the night in the presence of the Revered Master. After the epidemic was over the Revered Master returned to his abode at Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad. We used to visit him there almost every day.

“If a seeker continually sustains the initial zeal, he progresses rapidly. By and large seekers slow down or stop after the initial fervour. On this path, one has to continually march without respite. As Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Burn yourself as long as you live,
Nothing but burning helps,
Must march in all seasons,
There is no time for respite.

(The Master paused for a while and then continued).

“The preceptor (satguru) grants to the seeker, in one word, the essence of all the scriptures. If the seeker practises that unceasingly, he will gain everything.”

Just then a man (Mr. X), who looked very gloomy, entered the hall. Seeing him, the Master enquired if all was well with him. He whispered something in the Master's ear, whereupon the Master said, "We shall go right now". He called his younger daughter and asked her to get his bag ready, as he was immediately leaving for Bombay. He then left for the residential barrack.

As the discourse (satsang) had come to an abrupt end, everybody was taken aback. Someone asked X what the matter was. He replied that his child was ill, so he had requested the Master to see the child. Someone remarked whether it was at all necessary for the Master to go for this all the way to Bombay, there being no dearth of physicians in the city of Bombay. Just at that moment the Master suddenly entered the hall. Having overheard the remarks, he said, "I would like to personally examine the child. This will cause me no inconvenience." He then asked X if it was the time for the train. With tearful eyes X replied that it was.

I, too, had to return to Bombay. I proposed to go with the Master. The Master counted the number of persons who wanted to go to Bombay. He then called Y and gave him something. Y went away briskly. As we reached the station, we found Y standing there with tickets in his hand. These were Class III¹ tickets. At this, I proposed that the Master should travel in Class I to avoid the inconvenience of travelling standing in an overcrowded Class III compartment. But the Master quietly brushed aside this suggestion. As we got into the train, there was no place for anyone of us to sit. But soon someone, sitting across there, who happened to know the Master, respectfully offered him his seat. After a few halts, we, too, got seats. Throughout the journey, the Master was quiet and his gaze was steadily fixed outside the window. Occasionally, he would turn to us. There was ecstasy in his look.

¹ Those days, the Indian Railways carried four types of coaches: Classes I, II, Inter and III. Class III was the lowest.

On reaching Bombay V.T. station, I asked the Master about his programme so that I could visit him there.

MEETING 6

PRANAYAMA

(Breath Control)

SHANTI NAGAR 16 November, 1952 (*midnight*)

It was midnight. The Master was sitting in meditation as usual. As it was a holiday today, some devotees—local and from other stations—were also staying here. All—men and women—were busy in practice. Lights were off.

Suddenly, someone started devotional music with a monostring. We could instantly make out who he was. He was a devotee of some other Sufi saint and had great affection for the Master. He used to come here frequently to entertain and please the Master with his music without any consideration of time; whenever he felt an impulse he would come and quietly start singing. Everyone was pleased when he came. He sang with emotion, anguish and sincerity. Today, also, his music was very enchanting. It was midnight, there was absolute silence all around, and the atmosphere was charged with a magnetic force. So, the music touched our hearts. The songs selected by him today had a common theme: pranayama or breath control. These had been composed by great Sufi saints (of Sind)—Sai Qutab Ali Shah Sahib, Sachal Sarmast, Darya Khan, Shah Abdul Latif and Bedil. In these compositions, the saints had spoken in praise of pranayama and had also narrated their experiences in this realm. One song composed by the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah Sahib) was:

Raising the word from the navel lotus,
They form the rhythm at the throat lotus,
Carrying the sacred word of the preceptor,
They practice concentration in the head.

The compositions of Shah Abdul Latif were:

Turn the wheel in a way,
That the sleeping one is awakened.

And

Turn the wheel in a way,
That no noise is made.

The compositions by Bedil were:

Guard the breath,
Breath is the divine mystery.
Breath is a river, deep ocean,
Unique and without a peer.
Its waves are manifest and latent,
The drops merge in the ocean.
x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
Learn how to lose ego,
Reading and teaching are of no avail.
x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x
Take hold of the centre of
Inhaling and exhaling,
And enjoy the cross currents.

The music was excellent, but the content was difficult and not intelligible to everybody. Around 4 o'clock, when all of us had been free from the morning duties, a lady devotee approached the Master for a clarification.

Lady devotee: "Sir, the music was highly pleasing, but we could not follow many lines, for example:

*Vich urooj nuzool di ghin toon
Lazat awan jawan di."*

Master: "All the compositions rendered today described the practice of pranayama or breath control. *Urooj* means 'inhaling the breath,' and *nuzool* means 'exhaling the breath.' Some seekers are advised the practice of pranayama by their preceptors. The preceptors explain the method of inhaling, holding the breath i.e. giving it a recess, and then exhaling. The breath must be accompanied with the holy word (*shabd*). It must not be without that, because a breath without the *word* is ineffective and in vain."

Question: “Sir, what is the purpose of moving the breath with *shabd*?”

Master: “The cosmos comprises five elements, and the human body, too, is made up of five elements. These are: earth, water, fire, air and *akash* (ether or space). Earth, water and fire are the lower elements, and air and *akash* are the higher elements. The human body resembles the cosmos. As is the manifest universe outside, so is a creation within. The sun, the moon, the stars, the five elements etc are all within. There is a centre for every element. The centre or *chakra* of earth is near the anus, of water near the genital, of fire near the naval, of air near the heart, and of *akash* near the throat. The preceptors advise the seekers to seek control over one of these elements, especially air. So, the practice of pranayama is recommended.”

Question: “Sir, why is control over air, and not over the other elements, advised? There must be a purpose in it.”

Master: “The main purpose of pranayama is annihilation of the ego by the seeker. The seeker who has so far been assuming himself to be a body must move out of the body and realize that he is not the body. He gets the evidence that he is not the body. A seeker acquires control over the mind by pranayama. The mind rides the breath which can be compared to a horse. When the breath—the horse—stops, the mind also stops. A seeker may first acquire control over one element and then seek control over the other elements. The main purpose of pranayama is egolessness (*la-vajudi*) which is attained by the control of the air or prana.

“Initially, the breath is gross. When it is regulated by the holy word (*shabd*) methodically according to the instructions of the satguru, the breath is made subtle; and then it acquires potency. A jiva can discover with its potency the hidden treasures within and enjoy the bliss.”

Question: “Sir, the breath is supposed to be subtle. How does it have power or potency?”

Master: “The subtle elements are very powerful. Let us take the example of steam. Water is heavy, but steam is light or subtle and is, therefore, very powerful. Very big machines, ships, trains etc operate with the power of steam. Electricity is too subtle to be seen, yet it can move very big things. So is the case of *prana-shakti* (life-force). The breath is the gross manifestation of the *prana-shakti* (life-force). *Prana*, in itself, is power (*shakti*) and the manifest external breath moves with its potency. When it (the manifest breath) is regulated according to the instructions of the preceptor, it gives up its impurities and becomes very light and pure. When purity is attained, the

latent potency—on whose support the gross breath moves—becomes potent and it merges in the Primordial Power. Thereafter, the hidden treasure is realized.

“Let us take the analogy of a mirror. Nothing is reflected in a mirror when it is covered with dust etc. But when it is cleansed, one can see one’s face in it. So, the preceptor directs the seeker to practice pranayama with the sacred word (*shabd*) so that the impurities on the mirror of the mind are removed and it becomes very clear. Then the entire universe can be seen reflected in that mirror (of mind). Dirt represents the impressions (*sanskaras*) and these are removed with bellows-like breath. When this is done the mind becomes pure and clear and then its potency, that was hidden under the dirt, becomes manifest. Pranayama cleans the mind, purifies thoughts and makes them powerful.

“One must establish a close relationship with one’s neighbors, because they are helpful in difficulties. Prana is one’s nearest neighbor. It is advisable to have a bond with the nearest neighbor, rather than with the distant entities, the other elements (*tattvas*). The breath is the basis of our life, so we must establish a close bond with it.”

Question: “Sir, you say that pranayama helps in the purification of mind, annihilation of ego, etc. What happens to those who are not advised this practice? Do they remain deprived of these benefits?”

Master: “It is not like that. Pranayama is one of the practices. A seeker can derive the same benefits—rather more—through love and devotion. In terms of its operations, the practice of pranayama is more difficult than contemplation etc but it is highly beneficial.”

Question: “Sir, do people these days have physical strength and stamina to practice pranayama? Some saints do not recommend pranayama to seekers because they (seekers) would not be able to bear the strain of this practice.”

Master: “In comparison with other methods, one needs more strength in the practice of pranayama. It is essential that the body should be healthy, strong and free from anxieties. Those who are wanting in these three pre-requisites cannot practice pranayama. Hence pranayama is not recommended these days. Nowadays, the minds of the people are burdened with anxieties. Unlike the people in the past, people nowadays have neither rich diet nor a carefree life. Saints, therefore, advise remembrance (*smaran*) and concentration (*dhyān*); but one cannot fly with these practices. One will remain in the gross state. But one can fly with the practice of pranayama. The other advantage of

pranayama is that one acquires occult powers with its practice. Nevertheless one has to be very careful, because these may cause impediments on the spiritual path.”

Question: “Sir, why should the occult powers cause obstacles on the spiritual path, if one were to use them only occasionally?”

Master: “The occult powers promote expansion of wants and desires. The spiritual path is the path of desirelessness. One has to renounce desire. If a seeker were to be busy in the fulfillment of desires, his march stops. The saints keep themselves above the occult powers.”

Question: “Sir, one can help others in the fulfillment of their desires with the occult powers. Why should one be scared of these?”

Master: “What kind of demands and desires? The transient and the ephemeral? When the occult powers are used, one becomes popular, one is surrounded by people and is praised and publicized. Certainly, the subtle ego sprouts in him and then all goes waste. A seeker must carefully watch and guard at every step, that he does not do anything that might lead to the arousal of the subtle ego and might bring his downfall. Although pranayama is relatively more difficult, yet it is very beneficial. Those who have been advised this practice, must follow it without fail under all odds. Stronger the struggle, greater are the benefits. Why not follow it and realize the beloved in the present birth and be saved from future rebirths? On this divine path, one must not care for one’s life. Muster courage and then progress. A seeker must not be afraid of effort or practice. Greater the pains, higher are the gains. Those who have love for the Beloved are always eager for early realization. Renouncing comforts and pleasures, and bearing sufferings and hardships, they meet the Beloved. Look, how hard one struggles for material gains! God is extremely subtle, and one has to face greater struggles and sufferings to attain Him. Therefore, those who have been advised this practice must follow it disregarding all bodily hardships.”

It was now 6 o’clock. The curtains were rolled up and the hall was made ready for the work of the dispensary.

MEETING 7

SILENCE AND CONCENTRATION

(Jibhya Roko, Deed Lagao)

BOMBAY 23 November, 1952

The Master had come here at the residence of a devotee. He was surrounded by devotees who had come from various places. There was total silence in the hall. For half an hour no one spoke a word, nor was there any movement. Everyone was looking intently at the Master. The Master occasionally turned his graceful look at everybody around him conveying tranquility, love and blessings. There was a mystic attraction in his look. Though singers were also present, he did not ask anyone to sing. It seemed as if *silence* was the theme of the satsang today. After some time, a devotee humbly addressed him, “Sir, silence is laudable, but we have been eagerly waiting to hear something from you.” Some others also supported him in a low voice.

Master: “Today’s silence reminds me of my satguru, the Revered Master. There used to be this kind of silence in his presence. Only a few of us used to be there. He would be in meditation and we sitting in silence in front of him. If at all an outsider happened to arrive there and start a mundane talk, the Revered Master would gently ask, ‘Is there anybody to start devotional music?’ Then someone among us would start a devotional song. It used to be total silence in his presence.

“You must have heard of Ramana Maharshi in South India. I am told that in his presence, too, it used be only silence. He used his look instead of the tongue. Sometime back, I had thought of seeing him. Silence is wonderful. Sages have commanded, ‘Be in silence, fix your concentration’ (जिभ्या रोको दीद लगाओ) Whatever be the status of a jiva, whether he be learned, or an expert, or high up in devotion (bhakti) or in knowledge (gyan), if he is wanting in the life-style or conduct, he will face many a down fall. Conduct or the mode of living is very important.”

Question: “Sir, how to achieve that mode of living or conduct?”

Master: “How to change one’s conduct or habits is a very important question. Practice of japa etc according to the precept of the satguru is not

adequate by itself. One has to observe certain austerities. Spiritual growth may be compared to the growth of a tree out of a seed. Initially, a seed has to remain buried under the ground; it has to remain concealed. If it were to remain open on the surface of the earth, it would be eaten away by birds, etc. Also, it has to be guarded with a fence.

“Let us have another analogy. A pregnant woman has to change her mode of activity after conception. She is also asked to change her diet. Similarly, a seeker must observe certain austerities or restrictions so that spiritualism strikes its roots within him. It is obligatory for him to change his habits and the mode of living or conduct. He has to fully abide by the instructions of his preceptor so that the spiritual seed planted by the preceptor germinates and grows into a tree and bears fruit. The first austerity to be observed is silence (*jibhya roko*). The temperament of a jiva undergoes a change only after he has controlled his tongue. Temperament is guided by the senses. When the senses are controlled, the temperament automatically changes and habits are modified. When the tongue is controlled, the ears and the eyes are automatically controlled.”

Question: “Sir, how are the eyes and the ears controlled with the control of tongue?”

Master: “Initially, the eyes and ears resist control. They eventually come under check when the tongue becomes silent. The eyes see continually, and they need an outlet through the tongue. What is seen must be transmitted through speech so that the eyes feel unburdened; but when the tongue is under check, the eyes, too, stop seeing. Same is the case with the ears. When one continually practices silence, one is able to reflect over the precept. Thus, introspection is enhanced. Thereafter, what is seen within must not be spoken about. One must enjoy the bliss within; it vanishes if it is talked about.

“The lips are in a pair. When they are united, they attain oneness; but when separated, they attain multiplicity. An uncontrolled tongue has brought about the downfall of many a great beings, e.g. Kag Bhusunda.”

Question: “Sir, how was Kag Bhusunda harmed by the tongue?”

Master: “Bhusunda was a great seeker. He had practiced hard on the path of *saguna* (worship of a form). He had attained absorption (*fanai*) in the form of his preceptor. But when his preceptor wanted to promote him to the path of *nirguna* (meditation on the Formless) he resisted. Bhusunda had so firmly meditated on the form (*saguna*) that he did not like to leave that path and alter his old habits. He entered into arguments with his satguru, with the

result that his satguru got annoyed with him and said that he (Bhusunda) was talking like a crow (*kag*). His progress stopped and he earned the name of Kag (crow). Hence he is called Kag Bhusunda. See, how badly he was harmed by a loose tongue.

“The control of the tongue comes first. When a jiva controls the tongue, he silently hears wherever he goes; he may observe, but does not speak at all. When one asks questions in a congregation—regardless of the fact that it is sincerely done for the removal of a doubt—the subtle ego is aroused. This does a great harm. Therefore, one must not put a question in a congregation. One must listen silently. Otherwise, what is heard is covered by the veil of ego.”

A devotee: “Sir, if it is so, we must not put any questions.”

Master: (*with a smile*): “You have not yet adopted silence. When you adopt silence, you may not put questions. Until then, it is admissible. Moreover, you are not talking about mundane matters. This (spiritual talk), too, is remembrance of the Lord. Silence is supreme; but if it is not there, spiritual talks are welcome. This too is a mode of practice (*sadhana*). As Shah Abdul Latif has said:

A vision of the Beloved,
Or a talk about Him,
Do not deprive anyone, O! Lord,
Of these two things.”

Question: “Sir, is it that one has to remain quiet while observing silence, or, does the mind remain busy in some manner? One is likely to turn insane in the absence of an activity.”

Master: “Yes, activity is suggested. It is meditation through pranayama. Silence is wonderful but not like that of a brick wall; one has to be keenly watchful of one’s breath and ensure that it is accompanied with the holy word and that it does not go in vain. Only that silence is genuine where one is busy with nothing but the holy word (*Nam*). To keep the lips closed and then to remain busy in reading or writing is not the genuine silence. Silence should be another form of yearning. There should be nothing but yearning for the beloved within. Only he who has yearning for the Beloved can remain silent; none else can do that. The yearning grows into love. When the tongue is controlled, a power develops within which accelerates the pace on the

spiritual path. Let a person practice silence, and he will himself discover what a joy and bliss he enjoys within.

“Here, I am reminded of a very recent example. Leaving aside the examples of seekers on the spiritual path who are immensely benefited by silence, I am citing an example of an ordinary person to illustrate how immensely silence benefits a person in his ordinary daily life. There was an elderly person in a refugee camp near Bombay. He was so short-tempered that all the members of his family got sick of him. It has been ordained in scriptures that an old person should retire to a river bank. But who does it these days? Hence, such like cases happen. If an old person cannot leave his home, there is only one way out for him—to live like a deaf, dumb and blind person at home. If he cannot do this, he will not be happy, nor will he permit others to be happy. The situation, in this case, became so bad that his wife came to seek my advice. Having narrated all the details, she asked if I could prescribe a medicine for his anger. I told her that a medicine could be prescribed, but I would like to see the case, so he should be brought before me. She said that it would be difficult, because he would not agree. Some days later, however, he was brought before me, with great persuasion. The old man confessed that he was short-tempered and though he realized it, he felt helpless. I told him that if he could realize it, he must be complimented. I asked him if he would agree to take a medicine. He replied that he would try. But I put a condition that he would have to observe some restrictions if the medicine was to be effective. He asked about the restrictions. I told him that he would have to observe silence for one month, and that he would not talk but use only gestures. After some initial hesitation, he agreed to do so provided I assured him that he would be cured of his anger. I assured him that if his anger did not totally disappear, it would be considerably reduced. I gave him medicine for four weeks. At the end of four weeks, I eagerly waited for his visit. By the end of five weeks, his wife brought him to me. When I asked him how he was, he replied only by gestures that he was very happy. I asked his wife if he had truly observed silence. She replied that he now refused to talk. I asked him to talk to me, but he shook his head. Then I told him that he must talk at least to the doctor and give an account to him who had prescribed the treatment, after which he might again observe silence. With great reluctance he said in a low voice that he enjoyed silence very much, he enjoyed the peace within and regretted that he had not practiced silence earlier. Now this is the case of a worldly person. If silence could be so useful

in the ordinary life, it must be highly beneficial on the spiritual path. Silence is the first lesson on the path to subtlety. This is the first restriction or austerity for a seeker, other restrictions or austerities will follow later. Silence promotes right habits and right life-style.

“Silence is the supreme quality on the spiritual path. The greater the silence, the greater is the enlightenment within. The intellect of the seeker expands very much and his life-style is considerably altered. Let a jiva observe the austerity of silence for forty days and he will realize what a power is generated in him. This is a wonderful prescription. One has only to try it.

Simultaneously with the austerity of silence, one must observe one more restriction: **FIX YOUR GAZE** (दीद लगाओ). Fixation of the gaze implies concentration. The expression *Fix your gaze* (दीद लगाओ) has different connotations on the different paths. In Karma Marg (Path of Action) it implies that one must always be in satsang (holy company) and meditate on what one hears there. In Gyan Marg (Path of Knowledge), it implies that one has to reflect on the purport of what one has heard from the satguru; one has to realize the purport, and one must not deviate from that.

“In the Bhakti Marg (Path of Devotion) one has to fix one’s gaze on the eyes of his satguru and be fully absorbed in that and achieve *fanai*. One must not concentrate on any other part of the master’s body except his eyes. The four eyes—the two of the seeker and the two of the satguru—must remain united so that duality vanishes and oneness is attained. As Swami Sahib¹ has said:

When the four eyes meet,
Swami¹ realizes the Self.

¹ a well-known Sufi saint in Sind

“A jiva, who has not been initiated by a guru, may use a mirror and fix his gaze on the eyes of his image. He may enjoy the pleasure arising from their union.”

Question: “Sir, how is a jiva benefited by looking into his own eyes? These are the eyes of an ignorant being (*agyani*). How is one benefited by that

union?”

Master: “Who is seated in the eyes or the pupils? It is the Lord Himself. The Lord permeates every part of the body, yet there are special centres where He is more explicitly manifested. A king owns the entire palace, but there are a few special rooms where he stays. Similarly, the Lord permeates the entire body, but there are a few centres where he is easily found. These are: the heart, the eyes and the brain. Among these, the eyes are the most significant. The pupils have the same attributes as the Lord—subtlety, light and changelessness. The pupil is a very small part in the human body and it is very subtle (or delicate). God is light, and there is light in the pupils. Only the pupils and not any other part of the human body can see. God is immutable, and the pupils also do not change in size from birth to death. Eyes are divine and when a person fixes his gaze on his eyes in a mirror, he attains absorption and oneness. God is oneness (state of non-duality). Let us take the case of a small baby. While sucking the mother’s breast, it looks into her eyes and that gives it immense pleasure. Similarly, while concentrating on the holy word (*shabd*), a seeker must fix his gaze on the eyes of his satguru and thus the attributes of the satguru develop in him (seeker). God is *Sat* (Truth) and the jiva becomes *Sat*—he realises the Truth.”

There was the call for lunch and we dispersed.

MEETING 8

POSTURE, DIET, SLEEP AND WAKEFULNESS

SHANTI NAGAR 5 December, 1952 (*Evening*)

Master: “At the time of initiating a seeker, a satguru generally gives him some additional instructions. One of these relates to the posture. What should be the posture when a seeker is engaged in practice? That posture, in which a jiva can firmly remain without movement for a long time, is supposed to be the right one. It depends upon the age and habits of an individual. There cannot be a uniform posture for all. That posture, which an individual can easily maintain for a long time and remain alert in it, is appropriate for him. Postures are of various kinds. There are postures for the body and also for the various parts of the body—the tongue, ears, etc. A jiva must first master the body-posture and then he may master the postures for the tongue, ears, eyes, etc. Mastery of a posture is a kind of suffering which one must learn to forbear. Spiritualism is the path of suffering and nothing else.

“The other instruction pertains to food and diet. One is advised to consume that food which promotes health and vitality, and at the same time does not promote laziness. Those, who are advised pranayama, are directed to eat only that much which is digested in about an hour. One must not eat so much that the abdomen is stuffed and one has difficulty in regulating the breath. One must eat less than the usual. Also, instead of eating at night, one must eat in the evening, so that one does not feel drowsy during the night.

“The third instruction relates to loss of sleep or wakefulness. Loss of sleep or wakefulness is an excellent method to progress from the gross state to the subtle. Loss of sleep or wakefulness makes the thought process very subtle. Initially, if a seeker devotes less time to sleep, better it is for him; the longer the time he spends in meditation, the greater are the benefits.”

Question: “Sir, for how long should a jiva sleep?”

Master: “A fakir (saint, seeker) is allowed sleep of only twenty minutes in a period of twenty-four hours. This sleep of twenty minutes is the genuine sleep; the one beyond this is laziness and waste. Initially, a seeker must devote eight hours to spiritual pursuits. He may spend the remaining period of sixteen hours in mundane duties, including sleeping etc. Of the eight hours of spiritual pursuits, four may be spent in the morning and four at dusk. He

may, then, gradually extend the period of spiritual practice and eventually reach the stage when he is absorbed in practice for all the twenty-four hours.”

Question: “Sir, how to get over sleep?”

Master: “There are many prescriptions. I shall cite some examples to you.

1. Many years ago, a fakir came to Karachi. It was said that he used to be in samadhi for all the twenty-four hours. As I was then young, I was ever eager to meet such a person. I met him and asked him, ‘Sir, how have you controlled your sleep?’ He replied, ‘Initially, I used to put salt in my eyes. I could lose sleep only for a few hours, and soon the eyes got used to it. Then I started putting chilli powder into my eyes, and that has worked. Now I am relieved of sleep.’
2. A fakir used to sit in meditation on the bank of a canal. If he became drowsy, he would fall into the canal. He would come out of water and again sit in meditation.
3. A fakir used to sit in meditation on the crossbar of a persian wheel driven by an ox. When he felt sleepy, he would fall under the feet of the ox or into the well and then get up or come out and again sit in meditation.
4. Some fakirs keep long hair which they tie with a cord to a peg in the ceiling. When the head droops owing to drowsiness or sleep, the hair are pulled and this causes pain. They are then awakened.
5. It has been said of Mansoor¹ that at the time of his execution an attempt was made to mentally torture him by burning in his presence all his belongings, one by one. But Mansoor was not moved by the loss of his belongings. Eventually when they took out his sleeping mattress, a live scorpion dropped out of it. As the guards tried to kill the scorpion, Mansoor instantly shouted pleading that his innocent friend should not be harmed. Everybody was puzzled to find that Mansoor who had remained unmoved at the loss of his belongings should be agitated at the killing of a scorpion who he said was his innocent friend. Asked about the reason, Mansoor replied that whenever he had felt sleepy, he would take out the scorpion and get a sting. The scorpion-friend had helped him to lose sleep.”

¹ Mansoor was a Sufi saint who claimed *Ana-al-Haq* (I am God). This was resented by the Qazis. He was, therefore, executed.

Question: “Sir, weren’t you also following the same method as Mansoor, while you were in Aden?”

Master: “Like Mansoor, I did not keep a scorpion as a pet. The terrain was rocky and it was infested with scorpions. As I used to sleep on the floor, it was natural that I should get stung by the scorpions.”

Question: “Sir, what did you do when you were stung by scorpions?”

Master: “I could not do much. I would call my orderly Mehmood Hussain, who used to sleep on a cot by my side, and ask him to apply salt and rub an onion-piece on the affected spot and fix a tourniquet above that so that the poison did not spread to the rest of the body.”

Question: “Sir, why did you not sleep on a cot to save yourself from this ordeal?”

Master: “I had a furnished staff quarter provided by the government. The furniture included a cot and some other items. As I had been separated from the Revered Master, I did not like any thing—comforts, food, body-care. I had an orderly, Mehmood Hussain by name, appointed by the government. I gave the cot to him for his use. Initially, he refused to sleep on the cot saying that he could not use a cot when his boss was sleeping on the floor. I, however, explained to him that outside the dispensary, and after the working hours, we were equals—just human beings. He agreed under pressure. He used to sleep in the verandah by my side.”

Question: “Sir, did you kill the scorpions after the sting?”

Master: “In the beginning Mehmood Hussain used to kill the scorpions. But I did not like it. So, I asked him to carry the scorpions and drop them at a distance. As he used to return very soon, I presume that he killed them nearby. The terrain was rocky, and heavily infested with scorpions. Although Mehmood Hussain used to clean the place carefully in the evenings, yet they would somehow creep in and act according to their nature.”

Question: “Sir, it is said that a scorpion sting is very painful like a burn. How could you bear that so frequently?”

Master: “I used to get relief after rubbing salt and onion. The effect lasted about 2-3 hours. As I used to remain in meditation, I did not feel that.”

Question: “Sir, did you get sleep after the sting?”

Master: “How could that happen?”

Question: “Sir, it is said that scorpion poison is intoxicating. Did that help you in ecstasy?”

Master (*with a smile*): “Try and have a sting for yourself.” (*laughter*) “Here,

I am reminded of an anecdote about Sant Kabir. While crossing a street at night, Kabir Sahib overheard a couple quarreling between themselves. They spent the entire night in quarrel. In the morning Kabir Sahib asked the man what the matter was. The man replied, ‘Sir, we wanted to lose sleep so that we could use the night time fruitfully.’

“Some fakirs have music in their groups during the night. Some take their devotees for a long walk during the night. A fakir used to frequently strike his stick on the floor so that the sound kept the disciples awake and they remained in meditation. Our Revered Master, however, did not use force to keep us awake. At the appropriate time he would recite the following couplet, on hearing which all of us would get up.

Rise up you who are asleep,
Do not sleep that much,
What you consider to be easy
Is an arduous path,
The Divine Beloved
Cannot be attained with sleep.

“There are many ways to lose sleep. One may follow any way according to one’s choice. There is no better way of attaining subtlety other than losing sleep. All these endeavours are necessary until love arises. Once a person is possessed by love, then that will not allow him to sleep. Thereafter, he need not ask how to lose sleep. It is said:

How can they rest in sleep
Who are possessed with Divine Love.

“Those who are intoxicated with love are restless. How can they sleep?”

The Master then asked a lady devotee to sing two particular songs. These included this one also.

Giving up all bonds,
They roam in jungles.
They maintain a pace,
That they do not return.
Possessed with love,
They are without bonds.

They practice so arduously
That they realize the Self.
On this path,
Only a few may be seen.
They are the lovers,
Who agree to bear the cross.

There was anguish in her voice. The Master was listening with rapt attention. His eyes were wet with tears. He spoke very gently.

Master: “Yes, they are the lovers who agree to bear the cross and accept crucifixion! Let one accept the cross! Let one agree to give up one’s head! Nothing can be compared to that.”

The Master was not well and, therefore, a lady devotee requested him to take rest. Curtains were dropped, and beds were laid out. The Master retired.

MEETING 9

SERVICE AND CHARITY

(Seva aur Dan)

SHANTI NAGAR 25 December, 1952 (Morning)

The Master had gone to some other town. He returned to Shanti Nagar before the scheduled date. No sooner did I learn about it than I went to see him.

As I entered the hall, I found the Master busy in consulting medical (homoeopathy) books with the help of a lady devotee. Some other devotees were also sitting near him. I paid obeisance to him, but because he was busy he did not notice it. When he had finished the study of the references, he looked at me. With an expression of surprise he asked when I had arrived there. I got up, bowed to him again and said, “Sir, you were expected here on Sunday. It seems you have returned before the schedule.”

Master: “Yes, suddenly I felt like coming back. Perhaps that was the Divine Will. On reaching here I learnt that smallpox has broken out in the town as an epidemic. There have been many cases in the neighborhood. Yesterday, this lady and I visited all the cases and we have sent them the medicines. We have been studying all these cases. In some cases the poxes of the patients have become septic owing to negligence. There is a case of a brahmin who has refused treatment. With great difficulty we made him agree to take a medicine. This morning I was busy in meeting the patients here. So I asked her to go on a round to the patients at their homes. She has just returned.”

A devotee: “Sir, smallpox is a highly contagious disease. How did you ask her to visit the cases at their homes?”

Master (*with a smile and affectionately patting the lady on the head*): “May God bless her! God always protects those who ignore their own bodies and engage themselves in the service of the humanity. They are dear to Him.

“Service is wonderful; one should never evade it. The body belongs to the Lord; let it be of use to others. Those who do so are dear to the Lord. Also the blessings earned from others are a powerful protection. (*addressing the lady devotee*) Do not entertain any fear. God is the saviour. (*addressing the group*) One must not evade service, even at the cost of one’s life. Service is

wonderful. When a jiva engages himself in the service of God's creation and does good to others, he earns grace. The Lord transforms his life-style. Of him the Lord takes care here in this world and hereafter, too. Guruji (Guru Nanak) has said in Sri Sukhmani Sahib:

Satguru sikh ka halat palat sanware
(Satguru transforms the life-style of the disciple)"

Question: "Sir, what is implied by *halat-palat* (life-style)?"

Master: "When a jiva is engaged in service, his conduct, behaviour, attitude, thinking, etc improve and his path is enlightened. Thus he benefits here in this world and also in the world hereafter. Better if a jiva remembers Allah than his own name. He must be engaged in *seva* (service) so that he forgets the self."

Question: "Sir, what is *seva* (service)?"

Master: "The word *seva* is derived from *sevan*. It implies that one must always contemplate and meditate in all modes of activity and with zeal and concentration on what the satguru has said. He must truly follow the words of the satguru. Compliance therewith is the best and the highest service. Other modes of service are also good, but this one is the supreme. Nothing pleases a sage more than this. But all seekers cannot do that. Only a selected few who are truly brave and capable can faithfully follow the precept in letter and in spirit. Many are engaged in meditation, but only a few can do it with perfection. It has, therefore, been ordained that simultaneously with the practice of meditation (practice of *shabd*) one must also be engaged in service."

Question: "Sir, how is service related with the practice of *shabd*? Kindly elucidate."

Master: "The entire creation seeks *ananda* (bliss). Human beings, birds, beasts, plants etc want bliss, because Allah permeates everything and Allah is bliss. Why then, in spite of the bliss being here, the jivas are missing peace (*shanti*)? There must be a reason for it. It is because we have forgotten our Primordial State, we have forgotten that we ourselves are of the nature of *sat-chit-ananda* (existence-knowledge-bliss). Instead, we have assumed ourselves to be the bodies. We can enjoy the bliss—that exists within—only if we give up body-consciousness and attain *fanai* (total absorption) with continuous service. When *fanai* is attained, bliss follows. The attainment of

fanai is the main purpose of all practices. Ananda follows *fanai*. One must be so engaged in service that one attains absorption, and gets lost and becomes oblivious of one's body. The deeper the absorption or *fanai*, the more lasting and stable is the bliss attained. You ask about the relationship between the practice of *shabd* and service. It is an intimate relationship. Service helps in the loss of ego, extinction of the mind and growth of love, and it promotes inclination towards *fanai*. Progressing gradually, one is able to forget the self. Once a person is trained in *fanai*, or he gets used to it, he can easily attain *fanai* in his satguru or in the *shabd*. To serve is divine. Service fosters the practice of *shabd*."

Question: "Sir, why is service, and not any other practice, chosen as a means to attain *fanai* (absorption or merger)?"

Master: "Service is the easiest of all the methods, and one can attain absorption better. In addition, other virtues such as humility etc are associated with service. Considering all aspects, the fakirs insist on service along with the practice of *shabd*. Service is a unique prescription."

A devotee: "Yes, sir. We had seen Sai Hadi Baksh¹ carrying bricks and mortar baskets on his head at the time of the construction of the Dargah (of Sai Qutab Ali Shah). On being asked why he did that when labourers were present in numbers, Sai Hadi Baksh replied that he wanted to remain busy and desired to annihilate his mind. Also, he wanted to set an example to the seekers."

¹ Sai Hadi Baksh was the grandson of Sai Qutab Ali Shah. He was *sajjadah nashin* at the Dargah Sahib of Sai Qutab Ali Shah in Hyderabad (Sind). He was also a contemporary and close associate of the Master.

Master: "Yes, the venerable have many virtues. Service is like a rein on the mind; it checks the wandering of the mind."

Question: "Sir, what happens of a jiva who is weak in body and is unable to engage himself in service?"

Master: "It matters little if one is weak physically. One may only fail to serve with the body. As there are three attributes in nature—sattva, rajas and tamas—so there are three kinds of service. First: material service, e.g. helping others with money, food, clothes, medicines etc. Second: physical services or service with the body, e.g. cleaning places, carrying water, serving food etc.

Third: service with the mind, e.g. giving good wishes, sending good vibrations, prayer to God about the welfare of others, etc. In the context of subtlety, service with the mind is the highest service; nothing can be compared with that. It is a concealed service and cannot be noticed by others. Service with the mind brings in immense bliss that is superior to material pleasures. A jiva who sends good wishes or vibrations to others, also helps himself. The good wishes or vibrations that are sent out influence others and affect the sender in return. He who is without good wishes is farther from God. If you wish your wellbeing, you must wish others well.”

Question: “Sir, is there a difference between service and charity?”

Master: “Not at all. Service (*seva*) is as good as charity or alms-giving (*dan*). A jiva who serves with his body, makes a donation of his body. When he serves food or medicines, he donates wealth. When he sends good wishes, he makes a donation of his mind. There is no distinction between service and charity, both imply the same thing. Both envisage sacrifice and renunciation. Both lead to the extinction of the ego or of the self.

“Service and charity or alms-giving are obligatory for all—from the beginning to the end. A jiva is born for the service and the good of others. One can undertake service or charity of three types—of the body, of the wealth, of the mind. Those who are not wealthy may give donations (*dan*) of the body and of the mind, and those who are ill or physically weak can easily undertake service and donation of the mind. A jiva must be adept in service; he receives blessings in return for service. Human beings may bless in words or may speak in praise; but the animals who are dumb, bless in their hearts. Even a small service earns blessings. Blessings made with heart are very potent.

“Blessings are a great thing. The more the good vibrations are sent out, the more merit one earns for oneself. Please tell me which other practice helps in earning blessings; it is only through service and charity. Compared with other practices, service and charity are more beneficial. Blessings generate the power in a jiva which lifts him towards God and facilitates his progress.”

Question: “Sir, you say that service and charity are obligatory for everybody. Does it apply to seekers and also to saints? Are saints also engaged in service and charity?”

Master: “These are essential for all. They help the receiver as also the giver. You ask whether the saints are engaged in service and charity. Since a question has been asked, I must talk a little about it, otherwise, one ought not

to utter a word about it. There is an immense difference—the difference between the earth and the heaven—between the service and charity by seekers and by saints. Saints do not own money, but they have spiritual wealth; they distribute out of it. Nothing on this earth can be compared with spiritual service. Besides, the saints make donations of good wishes, and their wishes are highly potent. Also, they practice bodily service. They do not remain quiet. It shows that saints, too, perform service and charity of the three kinds.”

Question: “Sir, should we give a donation to anybody who approaches, or should we first think before giving?”

Master: “A donation must be made only to the deserving. Now the question arises how to know that the recipient is deserving and that the donation would be approved (by God). In this context, I am reminded of an episode. Once upon a time a sadhu moving in a forest came across a hunter who had caught a bird and was about to kill it. Taking pity, the sadhu pleaded with the hunter to release the bird. With great persuasion, the hunter released the bird. But the Lord was displeased with the sadhu, because the bird was due to have a human birth, and it was now delayed. The sadhu had acted in good faith, but instead of a virtue, he had committed a sin. Therefore, the question arises how we should act? How to know whom to give in charity? The safe way to act is that while making a donation, we surrender or consign it to Lord Krishna.

“One should not make a donation of undesirable materials, e.g. spoiled food, a base coin or a sick cow, etc. One may donate food, clothes, knowledge, etc; but this should be done with a good spirit. Donation of spirituality is the supreme donation.”

Question: “Sir, you said that man is born for the welfare of others. How could it be so? I think man is born for his own progress.”

Master: “One’s progress arises from the service and charity to others. One can progress when one serves others, pleases them and earns their blessings. One can earn grace, only through service to others. One must feel obliged to those who provide one the opportunities for service, through which one’s progress becomes possible.”

Question: “Sir, what should be one’s motive in service or charity? Can one serve or donate without a motive (or a desire)?”

Master: “One must have no desire on the spiritual path. It is the path of desirelessness. If one is to have a desire, it should only be Self-realization or

realization of God; all other desires are in vain. If service or oblation to a saint is done for the fulfillment of a desire, then the fruits of service are utilized in the fulfillment of the desire. Whatever God grants to anybody is according to his motives or desires. Service without a motive accelerates the pace on the spiritual path. If a person maintains a desire, he cannot gain spiritually; instead, he gains only what is transient, ephemeral and illusory. It is an easy bargain for a saint to grant *maya* (material benefits). Material goods are transient and ephemeral and they vanish in no time. But suffering is lasting. One should desire *Sat* (Truth) and not *asat* (unreal)."

Question: "Sir, it has been generally observed that those engaged in service often develop a sense of pride and feel themselves superior to others. Service (*seva*) should promote humility and other virtues. It should not result in pride. How does that happen?"

Master: "It happens because such persons do not have the urge for God-realization, and even if they do have, it is not strong. A little praise by the people stimulates the ego in them and so they consider themselves to be important. The best remedy in such cases is to surrender all acts of service and charity to Lord Krishna (*Sri Krishna arpan*). By so doing one is saved from the subtle ego, and even if it arises, it does not strike deep and soon disappears."

Question: "Sir, what is implied by surrender to Lord Krishna (*Sri Krishna arpan*)?"

Master: "While performing any service a jiva must think, 'This service is to Lord Krishna. He is my Lord and I am His servant. I am serving Him and none else.' Or he may think: 'Lord Krishna is making me serve; He is using my body as His instrument and that I do not exist.' If a jiva performs service with either of these thoughts in his mind, he must be complimented. When he acts in this manner, he is not subject to subtle ego, and even if the subtle ego arises occasionally, it does not last long and soon disappears. If a jiva cannot act in this manner, he may surrender the fruits of his service to Lord Krishna, and then forget about it. He must renounce renunciation."

Question: "Sir, why should everybody think of Sri Krishna only in his mind? Some may prefer Sri Ramchandra, Guru Nanak, or someone else. Who should they surrender to in such cases?"

Master: "We do not have to adhere to the letters 'Surrender to Lord Krishna' (*Sri Krishna arpan*). We have to follow the purport or spirit—'I surrender to Him who is the Lord of my heart and is the dearest to me'. It covers all,

including also his satguru. One must surrender to Him whom he considers his Master—that is what is implied by ‘the surrender to Lord Krishna’. I shall suggest here the example of Majnu. He loved Laila; to him she was everything. One day some people said to Majnu that he had been called by Allah and he must go with them to see Him. Majnu replied, ‘I have not heard of Allah. To me Laila is everything. Ask your Allah to appear in the form of Laila and I shall go to see him’.”

Question: “Sir, can there be service in the absence of love?”

Master: “Service is of two kinds. One is the mechanical service performed by labourers. It is labour and not service (*seva*). The other is the service resulting from love, and that service is commendable. Whatever service a jiva performs, must be performed with love and without subtle ego.”

Question: “Sir, how can a jiva undertake service with love in the beginning? How can he have love to begin with?”

Master: “God has placed love in every heart; it is latent there. Without love, a jiva cannot function on the earth. The earth itself is established in love. There is love in every heart. See how a jiva works with zeal and love for mundane gains, how intensely he loves the world! Yet, we ask how he will serve with love. All right, let us assume that he cannot serve with love in the beginning. Let him then, to begin with, serve like a labourer, and do it intensely in a good spirit. Let him undergo this ordeal. Eventually, in this process, his heart will become gentle and love will manifest itself there.

“How a person undergoes great transformation through service is best illustrated by the example of Guru Amardas Sahib. Initially, he was an ordinary, illiterate person knowing nothing. Then he served his satguru so intensely that he was possessed with love (*ishq*). He was so much absorbed in love that he liked nothing but service. His satguru had a sore on his foot and Amardas Sahib used to suck pus out of the sore to give relief in pain to the satguru. He did not hesitate in this service at all. It was the service that later got him the status of a Guru¹—so high a spiritual status. To serve is a great thing.”

¹ Guru Amardas Sahib became the third Guru after Guru Nanak.

Suddenly, a stranger entered the hall. With folded hands and in a choked voice he said to the Master, “Sir, I have heard that you are the master of

healing and of grace (*dava aur dua*). Hearing your fame, I have come here. My only son is afflicted with smallpox and we are panic-stricken. Could you kindly come with me to see the child and give him medicine?"

Master: "Perhaps, I have not seen you before."

Stranger: "No sir. I am coming here for the first time. I had to do this reluctantly, because other doctors in the town are not willing to come to my house."

The Master asked a devotee to bring him his cap and walking stick. As the Master and the stranger were about to leave, I thought that I, too, must go and see how the Master looked after the patients, and therefore, requested for permission to accompany them. The Master said, "It is a contagious disease. Won't you be afraid?" I said, "Sir, I am with you." He said, "All right, may God take care of you."

After walking for about ten minutes we reached the barrack. On entering there we saw that the patient was a boy of about 15 years and he was very restless and looked panicky. The poxes were growing. After examining, the Master said to the boy, "It is nothing serious and there is no cause of anxiety. The poxes will disappear. Won't you take medicine? It is very sweet. These are very small globules. They just melt in the mouth." Taking a phial out of his bag, he put 12 globules in his mouth and said again to him, "Aren't these sweet? Don't you like these? Very pleasant! Take three more doses and you will feel relieved."

The Master had spoken in such a sweet and loving tone that the expression of panic on the face of the boy instantly disappeared and he gave a smile. Seeing a change on the face of the boy, his father fell at the Master's feet and thanked him very much. The Master gave him some doses of the medicine and also instructions about diet, etc. As we were leaving, he offered the Master some money as fee, but the Master declined. The man got puzzled. It was something strange for him to see a doctor not accepting fee. To him, it was an unusual experience—a doctor instantly rushing on foot to a patient in response to a call and then refusing fee for the visit and charges for the medicine. He was so amazed that he even forgot to wish us a good-bye.

On returning to our place, I tried to narrate the incident to some fellow devotees there. They showed no surprise at it but narrated some episodes of this kind from the life of the Master in Sind.

First devotee: "Cholera and typhoid epidemics were very frequent in the towns of Rohri and Sukkur in Sind. On these occasions Doctor Sahib¹ used to

put his heart and soul in the service of the people. He would set out early in the morning and visit patients—known and unknown, rich and poor—at their homes. He charged no fee, and, therefore, he was above monetary considerations. In critical cases he would, on his own, visit the patients several times in a day. He would also supply patent medicines to the needy and the poor who could not afford to purchase them, and he would send them milk, porridge etc from his home. Poor patients suffering from pneumonia were given brandy mixed in medicines. In case the bread-earner in a family happened to be bed-ridden, Doctor Sahib would quietly put some currency notes in the bed of the patient along with the packets of medicines. Owing to his selfless service he had an immense healing power and had earned great fame. It was natural that this should arouse envy in some quarters. Notwithstanding that, he would visit these people in order to keep his own ego under check. No sooner did he hear of the coming of a saint or a fakir in the town than he would instantly rush there to serve him.”

1 Because he was a qualified physician, the Master was generally known as Doctor Sahib in Sind.

Second Devotee: “One day when the Master was on a brief visit to Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad (Sind), and I was also present there, a stranger—a Muslim—approached the Master and said, ‘Can you please for the sake of Allah give me fifty rupees to help me pay a fine in the Court in lieu of a sentence of imprisonment?’ The Master replied, ‘I do not have that much amount with me at the moment. But in case you can wait and Allah sends anything for your sake, you may take it.’ Keeping faith, the stranger waited quietly in a corner there. Providentially, a rich person who was devoted to the Master arrived there, and with due respects placed currency notes worth fifty rupees before the Master with the request that these might be graciously accepted. The Master passed on the amount to the stranger saying, ‘Allah has sent this for you.’ The stranger received the amount and went away. Next day the stranger again came there, but this time he was accompanied by a policeman. Addressing the Master, the policeman said, ‘Doctor Sahib, this man says that he had received from you a sum of fifty rupees yesterday. Is that correct?’

‘Yes’, replied the Master.

‘Do you know this man?’ asked the policeman.

‘No’, said the Master.

‘If you did not know this man, why did you give him such a big amount¹?’ asked the policeman.

¹ In those days, this was considered to be a big amount.

‘Because he had asked in the name of Allah.’ replied the Master.

“Everybody present there was amazed at these words of the Master. The policeman could not restrain himself. Seeking an apology, he said, ‘Sir, we have seen many a dervish, but have not seen one like you who would give away such a big amount in charity to an unknown person. The facts of the case are like this. This man had to pay today a fine of fifty rupees or undergo a sentence of imprisonment. This morning he reported at the police station a theft of fifty rupees at his house last night—the amount he had to pay this morning to avoid arrest. Assuming that it was beyond his means to procure a big sum of fifty rupees, we suspected that the report of the theft was a false cover to avoid arrest. When he said that he had actually obtained the amount from you, I was deputed here to check with you the truth of his statement that he actually had an amount of fifty rupees with him’.”

Third devotee: “Some years ago, a good looking and well dressed young man came to the residence of the Master in Rohri (Sind). He was sporting long moustaches and a beard. He wore a long turban, a *sherwani* (long coat) and tight pyjamas in a typical Indian style. He said that he had arranged a special train for the places of pilgrimage. He also claimed that he had made elaborate arrangements and had registered many names, including those of some prominent people. He had proposed a charge of fifty rupees per head to cover the expenses on railway fare etc. He showed us his documents and counterfoils of the receipt books to convince us of his bonafides. The Master and some others agreed to join the pilgrim party. We paid him the advance money for which he gave us cash receipts. On the stipulated date nothing could be known about the special train or of that man. We were sorry for the way we had been duped. All efforts to locate him were in vain. Everybody had to bear the loss quietly.

“Some years later a person came to the Master and stayed as a guest at his house for a few days. He was dressed in the western style and was clean-shaven. The Master and his associates treated him with great warmth and

hospitality. When he left the place, the Master and his associates accompanied him to the railway station to see him off and gave him a warm send-off. No sooner had the train left the railway platform than the Master asked his associates if they had identified the guest. Everybody said, 'No sir'. Then the Master told them, 'He was the person who had collected fifty rupees each for the special train for pilgrimage.' Everybody was startled on hearing this and asked the Master why he had not told this to them earlier so that the man could have been handed over to the police. They asked the Master how and when he had come to know that. The Master said that he had known this as soon as that man entered his house, even though he had changed his guise. But since he had approached him in the capacity of a guest, he had claims to his (Master's) hospitality and service."

Fourth devotee: "Rarely anyone can match Doctor Sahib in service. At Rohri, there was hardly a day when he did not have guests at his house. The traditional houses were multi-storeyed; the ground floor was used by guests and visitors and the upper floors by the family. To serve the guests, Doctor Sahib used to carry himself—up and down—food, water, used plates, etc. He had to continually go up and down to attend to large parties of guests. Further, we did not have electricity in those days. During the hot weather in summer, Doctor Sahib would himself move the fan for the guests. He would not allow anyone among his associates (*sangat*) to help him in these chores. It seemed that he derived divine pleasure in doing those jobs himself."

Fifth devotee: "So far you have talked about physical and material services and charities by Doctor Sahib. I shall now narrate to you an example of his service of the mind. Some years ago Doctor Sahib had gone on a pilgrimage to Hardwar, with some associates. I was also in the party. We were staying on the fourth floor in a guest house (*dharmshala*) on the bank of River Ganga. One morning, Doctor Sahib and I were standing in the balcony of our room watching the flow of the river. We saw a man swimming at some distance. He looked tired and was trying to hold himself. Suddenly Doctor Sahib shouted, 'Look, the man is drowning.' Then he became grave and kept gazing at the man. I also looked around but could not see any sort of help upto a considerable distance. Suddenly, I saw a boat fast approaching the man. One of the two persons in the boat jumped into the water, picked up the drowning man and put him on the boat. I could not help shouting, 'God saved that man.' In a very solemn tone, Doctor Sahib, said, 'If a jiva cannot do anything more, let him at least send good wishes to others, whereby he himself is

helped.’ At that moment I could not get the purport of what he said. But the scene continued to hover over my mind and I would repeatedly ask myself how the boat, which was not to be seen there minutes before the event, suddenly appeared and how the man was saved from being drowned. As I could not resolve the mystery myself, I approached Doctor Sahib for an explanation. He said, ‘Nothing is wanting with the Lord. It does not take Him time to materialise anything.’ I tried to probe further, but he evaded all my questions. Then I had no difficulty in reaching the conclusion that this phenomenon was the result of the pure *sankalpa* of Doctor Sahib. This is an example of his service with the mind.”

We all were astonished to hear these narrations and thanked our friends, who had been old associates of the Master, for having enlightened us so much.

MEETING 10

HUMILITY AND POLITENESS

SHANTI NAGAR 4 January, 1953

This afternoon I arrived at Shanti Nagar earlier than usual. The Master was alone in the hall. As I was talking to him, a tall and handsome young man arrived there. He was wearing a silken shirt, white pyjamas, a black coat, a black cap and a beautiful and shining pair of shoes. He was in the prime of his youth. As the Master saw him at a distance, he immediately rose and went ahead to receive him. The youth tried to touch the Master's feet to show his respects, but the Master did not allow him to do. Instead, the Master himself bowed to him and touched his feet with deep regards. He respectfully brought him in and offered him his seat. The youth first declined to sit on the Master's seat, but on insistence, he agreed. The Master took a seat on the floor opposite to him. Then with folded hands the Master said to him, "It is your grace that you have come here. I am not worthy of that." After a brief pause, he continued, "You are welcome, you are graceful."

I was puzzled. The Master is in his seventies, and this young man is in early thirties. There is a vast difference in the age of the two. The Master is a saint of the highest realisation. I was astonished to see the manner in which he showed deep respects and profound humility to the young man. I had not seen such an instance before. I wondered who the young man was. I kept watching in amazement. The Master asked me to bring some refreshments for the visitor. I went to the residential barrack and brought some sweets, fruits, etc. The visitor first declined to take anything. With folded hands, the Master said to him, "It is by your grace; kindly do take something." Then the Master served him the refreshments. After he had finished eating, the Master said to him, "You have taken a lot of trouble in coming from Bombay. Kindly tell me what I can do for you. What is the purpose of your visit?" The young man told the Master the purpose of his coming. The Master assured him that he would arrange to get the work done that day itself.

Seeing the affection and the humility of the Master, the young visitor was stirred with emotion and he addressed the Master.

Visitor: "It has been said in Guruvani:

Khimya, gharibi, bandagi,

Ihi santan ki reet.

(Forgiveness, poverty and prayer
Are the ways of the saints.)

And

Jine gharibi sir dhari,

Se shahan ke shah,

Atal chhatra tin par jhule,

Waha gharibi waha.

(Those who accept poverty
Are the kings of kings,
They wear the immortal crown,
Blessed is poverty).

And

Kabir ham sab se bure,

Hum taj bhalo sabh koi,

Jin aisa kar maniya,

Meet hamara hoi.

(I am the worst among all, O! Kabir,
All but me are virtuous,
He who accepts so,
Is my friend).

And

Brahm gyani ke mitra shatru samani,

Brahm gyani ke nahin abhiman,

Brahm gyani uch te ucha,

Man apne hi sabh te neecha.

(Brahm gyani considers friends and foes alike,
Brahm gyani bears no pride,
Brahm gyani is supreme among all,
He keeps his mind humble to all).

“Today, I am personally witnessing these attributes in you. You are

venerable; your supreme devotion (bhakti) is praiseworthy. Whatever Guruji has said in Guru Granth Sahib, fully applies to you; hence you have attained to the supreme state. You are fortunate.”

(a brief pause)

“Guru Granth Sahib is a unique treasure gifted to us by Guruji. Let me tell you good news about it. Some of my friends have decided to get it printed in the Sindhi script. The first part of the manuscript has been finalised. I saw it yesterday and was greatly pleased with that. Guruvani is very sweet and enchanting and I would like its message to reach every home. Very few among us know Gurumukhi, and the vast majority among us cannot take advantage of the teachings of Guruji. Many Sindhis will benefit when the scripture is printed in the Sindhi script.”

Master: “Many years ago in Sind, I too, had thought that Guru Granth Sahib should be printed in Sindhi so that many might benefit by that. I had, therefore, got a manuscript prepared.”

Visitor: “Do you already have a manuscript prepared in Sindhi? Is it available with you here?”

Master: “Yes, would you like to see it?”

Visitor: “Certainly, yes.”

The Master gave some instructions to a devotee. Within a few minutes he respectfully brought on his head the Granth Sahib, properly draped in silken cloth on a wooden stand. He respectfully placed it before the visitor. The visitor opened it with due regards in the traditional manner and turned the pages.

Visitor: “This is wonderful. It has been prepared with great skill and care. Every page tallies with the printed Gurumukhi text. The first and the last words on every page in the manuscript also conform to the printed Gurumukhi text. May I know who that lucky person is who did it so meticulously with devotion and care?”

Master: “It has been prepared by my daughter-in-law, the wife of my eldest son. She has worked very hard at it. In case there was an error in writing a page, she would discard the page and do it over again. We had paper sheets specially designed for this work. There are no corrections in the manuscript as you see it now. Let me tell you something wonderful about it. In January, 1948, soon after the partition of India, our house in Karachi was ransacked by

rioters. The manuscript then was still in the form of loose sheets wrapped in a piece of cloth. The looters got hold of it, but finding it of no value to them, they threw it away and scattered the sheets in the courtyard of the house. By the grace of God, no sheet was lost or damaged. This and the picture of the Revered Master were the only items left with us, among all our belongings, at the time of our migration. On arrival here, we got the loose sheets stitched and bound, as you see them now. Many come here to derive pleasure out of it.”

Visitor: “Wonderful! Your daughter-in-law seems to be fortunate that her labour has been accepted by the Lord and the manuscript survived the great catastrophe.”

After he had finished seeing, the scripture was respectfully taken back. After a short while, he sought the permission of the Master to leave. The Master walked with him up to the gate and touched his feet and bade him good-bye.

I was awe-stricken by this episode. I thought of the Master’s high spiritual status and then of his humility. I was then reminded of his (Master’s) words, “Howsoever high may be the status granted by the Lord, one must not forsake humility.” The words were not a mere utterance in his case; he was the living example of what he had said. Hence, his utterances were highly potent.

As we returned to our seats, the Master could still see the expression of astonishment on my face. He asked me, “Did you recognise the visitor?”

“No sir, I had not seen him before.” was my reply. The Master said, “His forefathers were the gurus of my forefathers. He hails from the family of my *kula-gurus*. He deserves my respects for the sake of my forefathers. He belongs to Masand family. They are now maintaining a shrine at Bombay and have many followers. The ancestral Masands had served the Gurus¹. Owing to these considerations, he is worthy of my respect and reverence. He abounds in virtues.”

¹ the lineage of Guru Nanak

As I could not restrain myself, I said, “Sir, what humility you have displayed. You are divine light (*Noor-i-Ilahi*)! And just see his age!”

Master (*in a solemn tone*): “Divine light pervades everywhere. God

permeates every object. No one is small. After all, he belongs to the family of our *kula-gurus* (ancestral gurus) and, therefore, he is worthy of our respects.

“Humility is a great virtue. When after her marriage, a girl enters the family of her in-laws and bows to the elders, she earns their blessings. When she pays regards, she gets, in return, such blessings ‘May you live a long and happy married life.’ Whenever a jiva bows and shows respects to someone he earns his blessings. Blessings are highly potent; they build the life of the jiva. The minds of saints are very much saturated with anguish (*soz*) and they consider themselves too small. They are always eager for blessings so that their bonds with the Lord remain unbroken and everlasting.”

An elderly devotee: “Sir, humility has been highly praised in Guruvani. Guruji says in Sri Sukhmani Sahib:

*Apas ko jo jane neecha,
So o giniya sabh te ucha.”*

(He who considers himself the lowest among all
Is reckoned the highest amongst all).

Master: “Yes, humility is the cover for a jiva. The humble is never subject to an evil eye. None envies him. Only he who moves with arrogance and pride can be a victim of an evil eye. Who would look at a humble person? Who would cast an evil eye upon him? Who would envy him?

(the Master’s tone became firm and solemn)

“Humility (*niyaz*) is always accepted by God. One cannot say if pride (*naaz*) would at all be approved by Him. God is independent (*bepervah*). A jiva has ten fingers. When he brings them together in folded hands, the ten directions (*das disha*) come under his control.”

Question: “Sir, there are instances of some Vendantists and others, in whom humility is not discernible. They openly claim ‘I am That’ (*Aham Brahm asmi*) or ‘I am Brahm’. Some fakirs have claimed *Ana-al-Haq* (I am *Haq* or Allah). How does the question of humility arise there? What, then, happens in their case?”

Master: “They are above castigation or blame. Those who have lost the ego and have realised the Absolute or Allah, are correct if they consider themselves Allah, because they have realised that. Notwithstanding that, a jiva is born on this planet to win the Lord, and not to show off to the world.

One must not utter these things. Howsoever high a state one may realise—may be one has successfully traversed the path of *sagun* and *nirgun*—as long as one is within the frame of the five elements, that is, in a body, one can successfully maintain that state only by humility and politeness. The Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah) used to say, ‘When a fakir attains the egoless (*bekhudi*) state, he must be extremely cautious. Humility is the safety limit on this planet—earth. A jiva must remain within the bounds of humility. Those who openly proclaim *Ana-al-Haq*, and violate the laws of this plane, invite trouble for themselves, as it happened in the case of Mansoor and some others. Humility is a spiritual discipline. He who violates the discipline invites punishment. Mansoor had to face execution on this account.’

“There is the instance of another fakir in Sind. He was initiated at the age of fourteen. At the age of twenty-eight he proclaimed *Ana-al-Haq*, and soon he died. He was not allowed to remain on this planet anymore. Referring to these two cases the Revered Master used to say, ‘Had they lived on this planet for some time more and continued on the spiritual path, they would have themselves realised their mistakes.’ So, whatever be the distance traversed by a seeker on the spiritual path, and howsoever high may be the state attained to by him, he must overtly maintain humility; he may remain supreme within. He must maintain devotion in his behavior, though he may be a gyani in his faith. There are many constraints on this mortal plane.”

Question: “Sir, how can one acquire the attribute of humility?”

Master: “This attribute is acquired through satsang and service. Maybe to begin with, humility is artificial, but one attains genuine humility with continuous practice. Just as meditation and concentration are artificial in the initial stages, but they become genuine with practice, so is the case with humility. I shall, here, narrate to you a personal example.

“Saints have their periodical moods. Once Sai Roshan Ali Shah¹ ordered that no one should bow to him. Everybody at Dargah Sahib had these instructions. I was also informed. Next morning, as I entered into his presence, I bowed to him and took a seat opposite to him. Sai Roshan Ali Shah asked me, ‘Weren’t you informed of my instructions?’ I replied, ‘Sir, when I entered into your presence, I had no idea to bow to you, but involuntarily, my body bowed and my head touched the floor; I was helpless and, therefore, I beg your pardon.’ Then he said, ‘All right, you may do as you please, but others must follow my instructions.’ So, a time comes when humility becomes automatic. Initially, one has to train oneself in it. Let it be

artificial to begin with; but in due course it takes the true colour.”

1 son and spiritual successor to Sai Qutab Ali Shah

Question: “Sir, what you say is right. But the attribute of humility must be the effect of some other practices. Could you kindly tell us what practices automatically lead to humility?”

Master: “Initially, one must train oneself in simple and elementary practices. When someone rudely talks to you, you must politely request him to forgive you, as have been the instructions of Guruji. Humility, politeness and forgiveness are the attributes of gods, that is to say, these are divine attributes. To talk rudely, to bear anger and to hurt others are the attributes of demons—these are devilish attributes. A jiva must endeavour to imbibe divine attributes and thus he will step into the state of love (*ishq*) or devotion. Once he enters the state of devotion, he automatically becomes the image of humility.”

Thereafter, the Master became silent. For some time he did not say a word. Others also sat there quietly. The satsang was continued by way of reading from a scripture. The Master was quiet throughout. Some persons raised a few questions, but he gave them extremely brief replies, in a word or two. By the sunset, the satsang was over. It was time for the train to Bombay. I rose and bowed to the Master. Patting my back, he said something in an inaudible whisper. When I took leave of him, he was still in ecstasy.

MEETING 11

ENDEAVOUR AND GRACE

(Purushartha aur Kripa)

SHANTI NAGAR 8 March, 1952 (Evening)

At the end of the satsang, the Master and some devotees came to the courtyard of the house to spend the rest of the evening in the open air. This was the usual practice in the summer evenings. We were sitting there quietly. After a while, a devotee spoke.

Devotee: “Sir, while reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha in the satsang this afternoon, we learnt about the importance of *purushartha* (endeavour). Sri Vasishthaji¹ has very much stressed *purushartha*.”

¹ ji is suffixed to a name to show respect.

Master: “That is right. Neither bhakti (devotion) nor gyan (knowledge) can be realised without *purushartha*. Just as one has to work very hard for material benefits, so is the case on the spiritual path. One can pass a grade in a school or a university only with effort and hard work and not by remaining idle.”

Devotee: “Yes sir, one has to undertake intensive *purushartha* to gain wealth and material benefits.”

Master: “I would prefer to interpret the word *purushartha* as *purusha* and *artha*. *Purusha* connotes the satguru or the deity or the master of one’s heart. A seeker must behave like a female and consider his satguru to be the *purusha*. *Artha* signifies surrender (*arpan*). One has to surrender oneself to the beloved. The duty of a seeker is to endeavour and act silently with concentration on the Lord or the beloved. I would call only that as *purushartha*, and would not use this word for the efforts made for material benefits.”

Question: “Sir, do you agree with Sri Vasishthaji that *purushartha* is essential on the spiritual path?”

Master: “Endeavour is obligatory for man; that is the divine command. Man has been endowed with a body for a purpose—for endeavour, striving and progress. A jiva has to use his body on the karma marg (path of action), his heart on the bhakti marg (path of devotion), and his head on the gyan marg (path of knowledge). A jiva on the karma marg must strive physically; he must not keep idle. Sri Guru Nanak has stressed the importance of *purushartha* in the opening stanza of Sri Japaji Sahib. When the *sidhas*¹ heard from Sri Guru Nanak the praise of God, they asked him how God could be realised. Guru Nanak replied, ‘By *japa*’, that is ‘by remembering God’. Guruji did not tell them to remain idle. *Japa* is *purushartha*. Nothing can be attained without *purushartha*.”

¹ followers of a particular cult

Question: “Sir, you say that nothing can be attained without *purushartha*. That is all right. But in case a jiva has nothing in his destiny, he will get nothing in spite of his *purushartha*. We see numerous examples of this kind in our daily life. This suggests that *purushartha* by itself is not the only requirement. Besides *purushartha* something else is also needed owing to which the *purushartha* fructifies. What is that additional requirement?”

Master: “There is the factor of *karma* (past actions), and this cannot be ruled out. The *purushartha* of the previous births determines the destiny in the present birth which influences the actions (karma) in the present birth. But a jiva who uses intellect and engages himself in good actions, that is to say, who undertakes *purushartha*, improves his destiny for the future births. So, *purushartha* and destiny are interrelated. They are mutually causal—one is the cause of the other. But this rule applies only to the ordinary people who have not been initiated by a satguru. Those who have surrendered themselves to their satgurus are not within the operation of this rule. I would not lay importance upon karma. When a jiva surrenders himself to his satguru, his karma is consigned to the satguru. The satguru seals the karma and puts them in his own custody and asks the seeker to be engaged in *purushartha*. The seeker is directed to remain engaged in *purushartha*. The seeker is directed to remain engaged in what the satguru commands. *Prarabdha* (destiny) is operative as long as a jiva lives only by himself. Once he belongs to his satguru, his (seeker’s) destiny ceases. Henceforth, everything belongs to the

satguru. In ordinary life, too, it happens like this. As long as a girl is unmarried, her life is determined by her stars. But when she is married, she comes under the combined influence of her stars and the stars of her husband. Likewise, the destiny of a seeker ends when he surrenders himself to his satguru. Thereafter his destiny is united with that of the satguru to whom he belongs. Let us take another example. When a ship strikes ground in shallow waters, it is pulled out by towing it to other ships. Therefore, O jiva, if you cannot pull yourself, tie yourself to those who have luck, and they will pull you out and also push you forward on the spiritual path. The best destiny that a jiva is supposed to have attained is that he has a human birth, among the millions of the varieties of births, and that he has surrendered himself to the beloved. He who considers himself unlucky, may join the company of those who are lucky—let him surrender himself before them—and he will be saved from many ordeals. He must be firm in this faith.”

Question: “Sir, many a seeker surrenders to saints, but only a few have spiritual attainment, and others do not. Is it so because of karma or destiny?”

Master: “We cannot rule out karma, but eventually faith and purushartha always triumph. I shall cite one more example. Two seekers approached a satguru. The satguru assigned to each a separate plot of land and asked them to dig a well each in their respective plots. One seeker completed his work easily and quickly. The other seeker, however, was confronted with a rock underground. The satguru advised him to seek the assistance of a technician in rock cutting, and assured him of the presence of water below the rock. The seeker had faith in the words of the satguru, and he faithfully followed his instructions. Thus, he succeeded in locating water underground. This seeker was confronted with obstacles owing to his karma. But faith and purushartha brought him success. Faith in the words of the satguru is an essential prerequisite.

“Take another example. A jiva has to open a lock. He uses the key but fails to open the lock. He approaches a knowledgeable person who tells him that the key is the right one but the lock is rusted and he advises him to put some oil in the lock and then try the key. Following these instructions, the person removes with oil the rust in the lock and eventually succeeds in opening it. Faith and purushartha according to the instructions of a knowledgeable person led him to success. A jiva who has taken a human birth must endeavour, i.e. he must undertake purushartha.”

Question: “Sir, when does purushartha succeed or bear fruit?”

Master: “A seeker must not be concerned with the success or failure. The success or failure of the purushartha does not depend upon a jiva; he has only to endeavour. Success comes when the purushartha is accepted or approved by the beloved. A seeker must endeavour unceasingly. He is not to concern himself with the account of his endeavours. Let a jiva do his *karma* (endeavour) and Allah will do His *karam* (grace). The role of a jiva is to endeavour. It is for him—to whom he surrenders—to grant success.”

Question: “Sir, it indicates that, eventually, it is grace (*kripa*, *karam*) that works, and purushartha does not fructify in the absence of grace (*kripa*). Can it then be said that grace is more effective than purushartha?”

Master: “There is no doubt that grace is highly potent and the goal cannot be attained in the absence of grace (*kripa*), yet purushartha is absolutely essential. Grace, too, is ineffective in the absence of purushartha. For example, the Lord may visit a seeker at night. He knocks at his door, but if the seeker is asleep and does not open the door, the Lord goes away. The Lord had come to show His grace, but since the jiva had not undertaken the purushartha of remaining awake or had not trained himself in wakefulness, the Lord went back and the grace did not fructify. I shall give you another example. The Lord comes to a seeker to serve him with nectar (*amrita*). He pours nectar from His bowl, but if the jiva has not learnt the art of holding nectar in his hands, it slips through his fingers. The Lord bestowed His grace upon him. He poured nectar into his hands. But if the jiva has not prepared himself—that is, he has not done purushartha or learnt the art of holding nectar in his hands—the grace goes waste. It is, therefore, necessary that a jiva must first grace himself before he can earn the grace of the Lord.”

Question: “Sir, are there different types of grace?”

Master: “Yes. There are three types of grace: God’s grace (*Prabhu kripa*), the preceptor’s grace (*satguru kripa*), and personal grace or one’s grace upon oneself.

“It is the God’s grace that He has granted to us the human birth and has endowed us with intellect. The other species (*yoni*) are without intellect. It is only in a human birth that one can realise God. God cannot be realised in the births of animals and demi-gods (*devata*). Would you consider it a small grace? The grace of God is ever flowing. God is not wanting in anything. Only there should be somebody to receive the grace, or one should know how to receive or hold the grace. One has to purify one’s mind, or keep clean the receptacle of the heart to receive the grace.

“The preceptor’s grace is the precept received from the satguru by which one can attain to the Primordial State (*Omkari awastha*).

“Personal grace is the purushartha, the endeavour by which a seeker reaches his goal. The goal cannot be attained by idleness. Man has intellect—the unique possession—which other species do not have. He has to go ahead and strive with the help of intellect. When as a result of his continuous endeavour he succeeds in rightly maintaining the receptacle of his heart, he receives the grace of the Lord which is ever pouring out. This attainment is not possible in the absence of purushartha. One can attain the grace of the satguru only when one strives according to the instructions of the satguru. It cannot be done by other means. Therefore, purushartha is very essential.

(*with a smile*) “You have heard about *swyamvar*. It is a system of marriage (among the Hindus) where a girl selects a suitable match for herself. Many aspirants come to a place. After seeing the suitors, the girl puts a garland around the neck of one whom she chooses as her husband. Only one among all the aspirants gets a bride. But those not selected have the benefit of having seen the bride, and also they figure in the roll of the suitors. When a jiva attends *swyamvars*, or he continues to make efforts, he will one day—if not today, then tomorrow—be selected by a bride, that is, he will earn the grace of the satguru and the Lord.”

Question: “Sir, one earns personal grace by purushartha only. But, in my opinion, one cannot undertake purushartha. How can an insignificant thing like man do anything? He is too small to do anything.”

Master: “Such ideas arise due to laziness. This is not a path of laziness; it is a path of activity. If one can work hard for various things—for eating, undertaking jobs, running industries—why can’t one strive on the spiritual path? Man has to work and not to remain idle; let him march ahead! Shah Abdul Latif has said:

The Beloved will come forward to you,
You too take some steps ahead,
Let not the Beloved believe,
You are good for nothing.”

Question: “Sir, we have heard and read of instances of seekers getting enlightenment by mere gaze of their satgurus. These instances can be quoted from the life histories of sages and (Sikh) Gurus. Where does the question of

purushartha arise in such instances? The seekers did nothing and yet they earned enormous grace.”

Master: “We come across an instance of this kind in the life of Guru Nanak. Once Guru Nanak, accompanied by two disciples, Bala and Mardana, came to a country. While they were sitting under a tree, a boy passed by. Guru Nanak asked Mardana to bring that boy. The boy came there. As Guru Nanak looked into the eyes of the boy, the boy got enlightenment (*nazaren nihāl ho gaya*). Seeing that, Mardana shouted and complained of injustice by Gururji saying that he had spent his life with Gururji, and had intensely served him and yet this stranger—still in his teens—instantly got enormous grace. Guru Nanak replied, ‘In terms of years, the boy may appear very young, but his lamp is ready—the oil and wick are in it—and it only needed ignition, and I have done that. I had nothing more to do; I had come here only for this purpose.’

“A saint may grant enlightenment by his gaze, but in case the recipient does not deserve the grace might either go waste or do harm. When the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah) had returned to his place, after severe penance of fourteen years in the hills, he cast his gaze upon three individuals. One person, who could not bear the intensity of the ‘light’, died the next day. The second person turned insane and he, too, died within a few days. Only the third person could bear the glow and absorb the ‘light’. He was Sai Roshan Ali Shah, the eldest son of the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah). The minds of the first two individuals were not (fully) pure and, therefore, they were harmed. The third one had ancestral qualities (*tukhm*) owing to which his mind was pure and he deserved; hence he could hold the grace.

“When a person, whose mind is impure with the rust and dust of the impressions (*sanskaras*) of the previous births, undertakes purushartha according to the precept of his satguru and attains the purity of the mind, the satguru who is puissant will attract him, that is, bestow grace that brings benefit. Purushartha is an essential requirement to ensure that the grace is not wasted. Furthermore, grace can help a jiva only up to some stages. The final stage—the state of *turiya-atit* where one has to renounce even renunciation—cannot be traversed without purushartha. Grace may lift a jiva only up to *turiya* state where he has to realise the Self. Thus, purushartha is essential in the beginning and also in the end. Purushartha is of immense value.”

Question: “Sir, for how long should a jiva be engaged in purushartha?”

Master: “Let a jiva continue with purushartha. Once he enters the domain of

love (*ishq*), he will go up and move like air. When he is possessed with love (*ishq*), it won't occur to him to ask if he is to engage himself in purushartha or for how long."

The clock chimed seven and it was time for me to take the train. I took the Master's leave and left for Bombay.

MEETING 12

THE CONDUCT AND LIFE STYLE OF A SEEKER

POONA 23 May, 1957 (*Evening*)

This afternoon the Master arrived in Poona in the company of some devotees. Our host here was a disciple of some other Sufi saint of Sind with whom the Master had a very warm relationship. The Master loved the disciples of all saints, besides his own. Any jiva who had been initiated on the spiritual path was dear to the Master. The Master respected all saints. Thus many seekers were attracted to him. Some saints in Sind whose disciples had to migrate to India after the partition of the country had specially instructed their disciples to be in the company of Doctor Sahib in India.

We were lodged in a hotel in Poona. As we arrived here, many Sindhi devotees in Poona came to meet the Master and to have his *darshan*. The Master met everyone with warmth and affection.

It was the usual practice with the Master that whenever he arrived at a new place, he would enquire if any saint lived there. He would go to see him (have *darshan*). His humility before a saint was worth noting.

Unmindful of the age and spiritual status of the saint, he would himself behave like a child who sits and listens to his elders with deep respect. In an audience he would take a seat in the rear. He always tried to conceal himself and gave no impression to others of his own spiritual status. He was extremely fond of anonymity and this was something that one ought to learn from him. Here, he was told the names of the various saints in the town. It was decided that he and his group would call on Sadhu Vaswani that evening and visit others on the following days.

At 5 p.m. we started for Saint Mira School where Sadhu Vaswani was staying. It took us about five minutes to walk up to that place. On arrival there, we learnt that Sadhuji was not well and that he generally did not come downstairs. The Master said that he would go up to see Sadhuji. At that time, the Master was suffering from cataract in both the eyes and, therefore, could not see properly and needed support to walk. Also, owing to his advanced age and the recent heart attack, he had been specially advised by his doctors not to climb stairs. Disregarding the medical advice, the Master started going up the staircase, with the help of two persons. In the meantime someone had

gone up to inform Sadhuji of the Master's arrival. Sadhuji immediately came out of his living room and met the Master in the verandah on the first floor. It was a sight to watch the two saints meeting each other. What humility and warmth each one showed to the other! They touched each other's feet and Sadhu Vaswani said to the Master, "Sir, if I had known about your arrival, I would have come down to greet you." "No, since I have come to Poona, it is my duty to call on you," said the Master. After the exchange of greetings and enquiries about each other's health, they sat on chairs. They were surrounded by devotees. Addressing the group, Sadhuji said, "Dear friends, the beloved of the Lord has kindly come to us; please have his *darshan*. He is love personified; love is overflowing his eyes and tongue—from every part of his body." A functionary there proposed if Sadhuji could request Doctor Sahib to address the congregation (satsang) that evening. Sadhuji requested the Master. The Master replied, "I beg to be excused. I have come here to listen and not to speak." On further insistence by Sadhuji, the Master said, "As shall be the Divine Will then." *Prasad* was distributed. The Master and Sadhuji were led into the hall downstairs. There, the Master and Sadhuji sat in chairs by each other's side.

It was a fairly big hall and the audience was sizeable. Devotional music started and it continued for some time. The Secretary introduced the Master to the gathering and then he requested the Master to address the group. The Master stood up, greeted the gathering with folded hands, and with eyes closed he stood there quietly. After a short while he spoke.

Master: "I am reminded of a lyric by Shah Abdul Latif. It says:

*Likh kitab teku deva,
Je dilbar noo pahuchavin;
Jiven akhan tiven akhin,
Vende pal na laveen;
Gal vich kapda, sheeren zabani,
Dast peran te paveen;
Hi sir sahi ghulam tusan da,
Dil di mehar na laveen.*

(Take a page and write for me,
If you can carry it to my beloved;
Say exactly as I tell you,
You must not delay on the way;

With humility and gentle speech,
Bow to the beloved and say,
'I am truly thy slave,
Kindly deny me not thy grace.')

“Here Shah Sahib is asking a messenger (*qasid*) if he would carry his message to his beloved. The messenger says, ‘Why not, I belong to the family of messengers. (Those days there were no postal facilities and professional messengers carried messages.) Shah Sahib then tells the *qasid*, ‘You are trained to operate at the gross level—carrying worldly or mundane messages, messages of the gross—but this is a message of a different kind. It is a message of subtlety. As there are specific codes and sets of etiquette for conduct at the gross level, so there are specific codes for behaviour in the realm of subtlety. This message has to be conveyed differently. How will you do it if you have not been trained for it?’ The *qasid* replies, ‘Sir, teach me the style and manners and I shall follow them.’ Finding that the *qasid* has the desire to learn and that he is eager and sincere, and would act faithfully, Shah Sahib gives him the necessary instructions. He says:

Take a page and write for me,
If you can carry to the beloved.

‘O! *Qasid*, take my written message to the beloved; do not take it orally, lest you should forget or miss a part of it; this is not a message about the gross, it pertains to the subtle. You must learn the conduct and etiquette to be observed in the presence of the beloved, before you carry this message. You have to note five points.’

“One may ask here why Shah Sahib mentioned five points. Five is a very important number. There are five elements in the cosmos—akash, air, fire, water and earth. There are five senses (*gyanendriyan*) and five organs of action (*karmendriyan*). In Japa Sahib, it has been said:

Panch parvan, panch pardhanu

Islam, too, recognises five bodies. Guru Gobind Singh had five favourite disciples. *Karah prasad* includes five ingredients—flour, ghee (butter oil), sugar, water and heat (If any more item is added, it cannot be accepted as *karah prasad*). More examples stressing the importance of number five can

be quoted. So, Shah Sahib desires to give five points about the behaviour and etiquette.

“Similarly, the question arises what should be the conduct of a seeker when he is in the presence of the satguru? Where should he learn the etiquette from? He can learn the etiquette in satsang (holy association). Satsang is a school of love and a training center for subtlety. There are two important prerequisites for a seeker—company and faith. Company or association is a very important factor. A man is known by the company he keeps; his tendencies are determined by his associations. When he enters satsang, he gets the hue of *Sat* (Truth). There he hears about Truth, contemplates on Truth and then he practices what is agreeable to him.

“Shah Sahib says that there are five special characteristics of the behaviour of a seeker. The first two characteristics are thus outlined:

Say exactly as I tell you,
You must not delay on the way.

The first instruction is, ‘Say exactly as I tell you’, that is, do exactly as you are directed to, with no modifications. The duty of a seeker is to act exactly as he is directed by the satguru. Strict obedience or adherence is the first tenet of the spiritual discipline. One has to practise the *shabd* strictly as directed by the satguru. There is a special secret in it. *Shabd* is the master-key (that unlocks everything). The satguru grants to a seeker the essence of all scriptures in the form of a word (*shabd*)—a master-key—to be used in a prescribed manner to unlock the heart. The technique is important. There is a saying:

Rama Rama sabh koi kahe,
Kahane ka vichar,
Vohi Rama sadhu kahe,
Vohi sakal sansar.
[Everybody remembers Rama (God),
But there are ways to remember,
Saints remember the same word,
That the entire world remembers.]

“Everybody does the japa of the word *Rama*, but there are ways to do the japa. Saints do the japa in a way that is not known to the common man. Thus

the heart has to be unlocked in the assigned manner; it cannot be unlocked if the right method is not followed. One has to learn the method. *Shabd* does not fructify until a jiva engages himself in certain types of actions or karma. The karma include service—service to parents, to satguru, and to all the living beings. When one goes through the discipline, the soil of one's heart becomes ready and then the spiritual seed sprouts. In the process of service, one has to renounce comforts and forget the body so that the ego becomes weak and the *shabd* strikes roots. Therefore, the first guideline is: thorough practice of the *shabd* granted by the satguru strictly according to his instructions.

“The second instruction given by Shah Sahib is:

You must not delay on the way.

This suggests that there must not be complacency or slackening on the spiritual path. One must not conceive that one has practised enough or has progressed enough. One must not seek respite; this is a path of ceaseless march where there is no room for complacency, for respite, for softening of efforts and for wastage of time. One must strictly maintain concentration and direction, and the mind must be constantly focused on the goal without any break in the efforts.

“Besides these two instructions, Shah Sahib gives three more instructions:

With humility and gentle speech,
Bow to the beloved.

A seeker must be humble in the presence of the satguru, and he must function as a subordinate to him. One must treat oneself as a servant and the preceptor as the master. Only this is the beneficial attitude. God is ever-independent (*bepervah*), and humility is always acceptable to him. One can't say if pride is acceptable to him. Humility gets blessings that lift a jiva high in the sky. Thereafter, a jiva cannot be harmed, he cannot be envied, and he cannot be possessed by the subtle ego. These are the advantages of humility.

“Humility includes sweet tongue. A humble person—a servant—cannot be harsh in his utterance. He always speaks in a manner that pleases the satguru. When the satguru is pleased, he grants his grace. Pleasure of the satguru is a very great thing and a seeker who gets it, is very lucky.

“When Shah Sahib had explained the five conditions of the discipline, the

qasid asks what the message is. Shah Sahib talks about this in the last stanza, It is:

I am truly thy slave,
Kindly deny me not thy grace.

“Shah Sahib says, ‘O my beloved, I surrender to thee. I entirely belong to thee from the beginning to the end, now and in the future. Kindly do not deny me thy grace.’ Here, the seeker promises total surrender to the satguru. Surrender is of prime importance; precept comes after the surrender. The march on the spiritual path starts after the surrender. A seeker cannot march alone on the spiritual path. It is only when he marches along with the preceptor, that it, he acts according to the instructions of the preceptor, that he can successfully complete his journey. It is necessary for a seeker to surrender to a saint, and to beg before him and to learn to attain subtlety. He must learn to procure for himself the receptacle to catch the raindrops of love. Purushartha is obligatory for a seeker, and he has to struggle and strive; but he cannot attain the goal if he is lacking the grace of the satguru. He must get his blessings and grace and then undertake the march, and thus he will reach the destination. Hence a seeker prays to his satguru in the words of Shah Sahib, ‘Kindly deny me not thy grace.’

“The discipline or behaviour that can help a seeker in his progress in subtlety or spiritualism includes humility, zeal, obedience, diligence and value of time. When a seeker follows these, he will be fit to surrender and will be accepted by the satguru and receive his grace. It has been said:

All men are not beautiful,
All birds are not swans,
Only in rare cases
Does one find the blessed fragrance.

“Only those who have been accepted by the satguru and have received the grace, are beautiful and only they bear the blessed fragrance.”

With folded hands, the Master said *Hari Om* to the audience and then he took his seat.

There was silence for some time. Tears flowed from the eyes of Sadhuji, and intermittently he was wiping them with his hands. Some others, too, had tears in their eyes. After a while, the Secretary whispered something to

Sadhuji, but Sadhuji shook his head. Then the Secretary thanked the Master. The concluding hymn was recited collectively. That marked the end of the satsang.

Both the saints came out of the hall and took leave of each other.

MEETING 13

SATSANG 2

(Holy Association)

SHANTI NAGAR 25 April, 1954

Yesterday I returned to India from abroad after an absence of about a year. I had to go out on a very pressing assignment. Ordinarily, I did not wish to be away from the Master. The first thing that I wanted to do on my return home was to go to Shanti Nagar and be in the presence of the Master. Taking an early morning train, I arrived at Shanti Nagar.

As I entered the hall, I saw the Master sitting on a cot, and not on a mattress on the floor, quite unlike his usual practice. He was surrounded by some people, who were seated on a *duree* on the floor. I went ahead and bowed to him. Seeing me he burst with excitement and said, “O! You have come. It has been a long absence. Why didn’t you write about your coming here; we would have sent someone to the station to receive you. Welcome! Welcome!” I was too deeply touched by his affectionate remarks to utter a word in reply. As I looked into his face, I received a severe jolt. His face had turned pale, there were wrinkles on it and he had lost weight considerably. Though he looked very weak, there was no change in the radiance of his eyes and his smile was as charming as ever before.

I said, “Sir, it seems that it had been a severe illness. But you had made no mention of it in your letters.”

Before the Master could react to my remarks, a devotee who was standing nearby said, “We must thank God that you are now seeing him in a better condition. He is much better than what he was some time back.”

The Master said, “Yes, he speaks right. We are immensely grateful to the Lord. How could we write all these things to you at such a distance and put you to anxiety? How far can one depend on the body that is mutable and transient? Change is the law of the world. How long should one worry about the body? In whatever state one may be, the Lord must not be forgotten. One must be ever directed to Him.”

“But, sir, the saints commit no sins and they are ever engaged in the

welfare of others. Why does the Lord make them suffer? Why aren't they always in good health?" I asked him.

The Master replied, "No. How can we say like that? How can we dictate our dear Lord? Nothing could be wrong with his doings. He takes no less care even now. Look, earlier I used to sit on the floor, and now I am made to sit on a cot. Everybody takes care of me and takes pains to meet me and bless me. The doctors have forbidden me to sit on the floor, and when I feel tired I have to sit on an easy chair placed by my side. In what way has He ignored me? He is gracious and benevolent."

A devotee said, "Sir, you have been sitting like this for a long time. You must take rest now."

Pointing to the gathering the Master said, "Look, they have come from a long distance to bless me, and you ask me to leave them and take rest! Forget about that, (*pointing to me*) I think everyone else has had his breakfast. Please serve him breakfast. Bring it here and we shall ask him about his experiences abroad. (*turning to me with a smile*) See how well I am being looked after. Now tell me if the Lord has ignored me or shown less consideration. Not at all."

Everybody laughed. By these utterances, he made us feel lighter and more relaxed.

As I looked around in the hall, I found everything as it used to be before, but with one difference. Earlier the walls used to be bare. Now I found pictures—of Sri Ramchandra, Sri Krishna, Guru Nanak, Sai Qutab Ali Shah, Sai Baba, Ramana Maharshi—fixed on the walls. As I was looking at the walls with curiosity, the Master said with a gentle smile, "You are seeing something new on the walls." I said, "Yes, sir."

The Master said, "You have come after a long time. You will notice a few more changes. First, you saw me sitting on a cot. Second, you are seeing pictures on the walls. Third, we have satsang also in the morning every day. Now, we have satsang twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. Things happen as is the will of the Lord. What He ordains is for the good."

I asked the Master, "Sir, how did so many pictures get assembled here?"
Master: "What the Lord wills materialises in no time. I did not purchase these, nor had I thought of them, nor had I entertained an idea (*sankalpa*) about them. Someone or the other in the *sangat* thought of these and fixed them here. It seems that the Lord had moved such ideas in their minds and so they brought the pictures. That must be the will of the Lord."

A devotee: “Sir, if everybody were to bring pictures and fix them here, the walls would be fully covered with them.”

Master: “Let them do so. What is wrong with pictures? They remind us about silence, do not talk at all and see very quietly. They are always silent and maintain evenness. (*pause*) Unless a jiva develops firm devotion by constantly remaining in satsang, he can neither realise the value of silence, nor can he enjoy the bliss thereof. Satsang is invaluable and one is immensely benefited by it.”

A devotee: “Sir, you had said earlier that every step taken towards satsang brings immense benefits.”

Master: “That is right. It has been recorded in the scriptures that for every step a jiva takes towards satsang, a *yajna* is credited to his account with the Almighty.”

Another devotee: “Sir, that seems to be an easy bargain.”

Master: “Even the *raj*¹ (dust) of those who come to satsang with divine love in their hearts is highly precious.”

1 रज

Question: “Sir, what is *raj*?”

Master: “*Raj* is the dust collected on the feet or on the footwear of saints and others who come to satsang. This dust is highly potent and is charged with blessings. One earns immense benefits by its application on the forehead. There are other benefits also.

“I am reminded of my visit to Quetta². We had gone to a gurudwara³ to attend Guru Nanak’s birthday celebrations. As we were entering the gurudwara, my attention was drawn by something. We saw a lady—who by her appearance and dress seemed to be from a rich family—cleaning the footwear left by the devotees at the gate and carefully collecting in the flap of her shirt the dust from the footwear. I stopped there and watched her with curiosity. I asked her, ‘Mother, what is it that you are doing?’ She replied, ‘I am collecting *raj*. The devotees who come here are very fortunate. They have divine love in their hearts that makes them leave their mundane activities and brings them here. They come here for one thing: to see and listen to Guruji. The dust of their feet is extraordinary; it is holy dust and carries blessings

with it. In Punjabi we call it *raj*.' Then I asked her, 'Mother, what do you do with it?' She replied, 'It is useful in many ways. We may mix it with water and take a bath to get relief in fever, pain, etc. A childless woman may apply it on her abdomen and she will get pregnant. It is useful in many other ways.' I was pleased to see this and asked my associates to take a special note of it. This, too, was an important learning experience for us. This, too, is satsang.

2 a hill-town in Pakistan

3 A Sikh shrine

“At Gurudwara Sis Ganj in Delhi, there are two small water tubs placed at the entrance for the devotees to wash their feet in, before entering the Gurudwara. Those who are intensely devoted sprinkle on their heads some water from these tubs before entering the Gurudwara. If this be the status of the dust of the devotees, what would be the status of the dust of those who have realised the Truth? Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Those who remember God the whole night,
Their dust, O! Latif, is venerated,
And millions come to bow before it.”

A devotee: “Sir, it has been seen that some dust is distributed as *prasad* at the dargah of some fakirs in Sind.”

Master: “That is not dust. It is the blessed *prasad* which reminds us, ‘O! jiva, you are dust, and you should be such dust that all may salute and bow down to it. Whose dust is distributed as *prasad*? It is the dust of the lovers who have realised the Truth, and have used their breath rightly in love and devotion for the Lord. How does this kind of faith and devotion arise? It is the product of satsang. Satsang is supreme.”

The clock struck eleven. A bowl of porridge was brought for the Master. After his recent illness, the diet and the meal timings for the Master had been altered under medical advice. We withdrew from the hall so that he might have some rest. I came to the hut that had been recently built in the courtyard. My friends in the hut asked me about my experiences of the visit abroad. But I was more interested in knowing about the recent illness of the Master. My friends told me how the Master got a serious heart attack when he had gone

to Lucknow. The body had become inert and cold, and the pulse had stopped beating. All hopes of his revival had been abandoned. When the doctor proposed to press a pin in the body to see if there was body reaction, the Master suddenly uttered *Hari Om*. Hopes were revived. On his recovery, the Master had said that he had got an extension for four years. During the period of illness, devotees in large numbers used to visit him to enquire about his health. Ignoring the medical advice, the Master would allow all devotees to see him. If he was checked, he would say, 'Forget about the doctors. They are under the influence of intelligence. God is something else.' At times patients, too, used to come to him for consultation. Someone had brought from a distant town a patient suffering from a serious mental illness. Putting aside all arguments the Master had attended to the patient with extreme care for many days. When the Master returned home (Shanti Nagar) after the illness, devotees in large numbers collected here in the hall. He received all of them. He was asked to sit on a cot, instead of on the floor, and a cot was placed in the hall. Reluctantly, he agreed to sit on a cot. With folded hands he made his apologies to everyone for sitting on a cot while everyone was sitting on the floor. When someone in the gathering remarked, 'Sir, what could be wrong with your sitting on a cot? We see many a dervish sitting on a well-laid dais while the audience sits below on the floor,' the Master had replied, 'Every dervish has his way of doing things.'

Soon we got a message that the Master had got up. We went into the hall and sat quietly opposite to him. Some sparrows were fluttering and chirping there. Seeing them, a devotee put him a question.

Question: "Sir, is there anything like the cycle of rebirths? Does a sparrow's birth come under that cycle? How is it that all religions do not believe in the cycle of rebirths?"

Master: "It is true that some religions do believe in the cycle of rebirths and some do not. All religions in India accept the cycle of rebirths. Among the followers of Islam, those who accept *shariat* do not believe in 84¹, but the fakirs who have been the witness to the Truth accept the cycle of rebirths. The Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah) has said in one of his lyrics:

¹ The religions of India accept the cycle of eighty-four hundred thousand births of different kinds.

Spending your time in eighty-four,

You call yourself by name Qutab.

He says to himself, ‘You are the self in the cycle of eighty-four lakh (hundred thousands) births and in the present birth you call yourself by the name Qutab.’ That is, the *jivatma* revolving in the cycle of eighty-four lakh births has assumed a human form and adopted a name for itself. Here the fakir accepts the cycle of eighty-four lakh births. The fakirs who have realised the Truth cannot say untruth. There is no better proof than their word.”

Question: “Sir, can one realise God in all births?”

Master: “Remembrance of God and realisation of God are possible only in a human birth, and not in the births as gods, beasts, birds etc. Self-realisation is possible only in a human birth. So, the human birth is supposed to be of the highest order among all the births. Intellect is a special attribute of the human birth; it is not present in the other births. One can expand and refine one’s intelligence by participation in satsang. Satsang is wonderful.”

Question: “Sir, can everybody achieve expansion of intelligence through satsang, and attain subtlety leading to God-realisation?”

Master: “If one does not progress after participation in satsang, one is certainly saved from retrogression. One is, at least, assured of a human birth next time also. This by itself is a great achievement and not a mean gain.”

Question: “Sir, there are instances available that show that some seekers who had spent their lifetime in satsang, had assumed lower births after death. We have read that Swami Ramananda, the guru of Sant Kabir, was born as an insect after his death.”

Master: “What I told you indicates the rule. The exceptions that are generally mentioned reaffirm the rule. It is also said that as is one’s attitude at the time of death, so is the rebirth assumed (*ant mati, soi gati*). One assumes a rebirth according to the nature of the strong ideation at the time of death. It is possible that owing to forgetfulness, one may be involved in a strong desire at the last moment, despite one’s participation in satsang, and thus one may take a lower birth. But after going through that particular birth, one again assumes a human birth. You mention Swami Ramananda. Having gone through the life of an insect, he attained to the supreme state. Such jivas might temporarily assume lower births, but in due course they are rewarded for their satsang.

“Swami Ramananda was a man of a very high spiritual status. Even an ordinary seeker who assumes a lower birth for a short period, maintains an

enlightened attitude during that birth. I will quote an example. At the ashram of Swami Keshavram¹ there was the practice of reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha every day. A dog used to come there at the commencement of the satsang, and it would sit there till the satsang lasted and then leave the place. Swami Keshavram asked his associates if they had recognised the dog. Nobody could answer. Then Swamiji told them that the dog was one of their old associates (by name) in its previous birth. In spite of a lower birth, it had an enlightened attitude—the result of its satsang in its previous birth. Such is the greatness of satsang.”

¹ a saint in Sind.

A devotee: “Sir, here, too, a crow used to come at the time of the satsang. In case it was late, you used to look for it. It breathed its last here under that bench.”

Master: “Yes, a crow used to visit this place every evening at the time of the satsang. It breathed its last under that bench. I happened to be away at that time. Our friends here had consigned its body to a river, with proper rites. Also, a dog used to come here regularly at the time of the satsang. All efforts to drive it out had failed. It never came here outside the hours of satsang. It has not come for sometime. May be it has died.

“I am reminded of a similar incident at Aden when I was posted there as a Medical Officer. I had carried two books: the Ramayana and the poems of Shah Abdul Latif. I liked the two books. I used to read the Ramayana, a little loudly, in the evenings. At that time, a cobra would come there, spread its hood and remain just opposite me. It would leave the place quietly as I finished my reading. Initially, I was scared, but did not like to suspend my reading. I would read the scripture, but would also keep an eye on the snake to see if it tried to advance towards me. But I found that it would do nothing; it would come at the time of reading and leave when the reading ended. I could make out that it was coming to listen to the scripture. Yet, to test it further I changed my room. On the first day, it did not come there. But the next day it appeared there, too; and it continued to come there regularly.”

A devotee: “Sir, the visits to satsang by the jivas of lower births indicate that these jivas had inclination for satsang in their previous births, but due to some other desires towards the end of their lives they had to come down in

the lower births.”

Master: “That is right. Man is divine; let him abandon desires and enjoy the bliss. Prior to the entry into satsang a jiva wastes his life in fulfilling his desires. After coming into satsang, he ought to spend the rest of his life in a different manner.

“Anything said in praise of satsang would be inadequate. Invisible powers visit satsang to bless the participants. He who goes there, is blessed. These blessings are of immense value.”

Question: “Sir, do invisible powers visit satsang?”

Master: “Yes, they come in the morning and at the sunset, more particularly in the morning. When the atmosphere is quiet and tranquil, the invisible powers come. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, saints and jivas of the astral plane come at that time. The pictures on the walls are their seats.”

Question: “Sir, during a *yajna* the brahmins (priests) prepare seats for the gods (*devatas*) to come and accept the oblations. But what is the purpose of their visits to a satsang?”

Master: “They wish to hear more of the path that has taken them to the superior state. Also, they carry with them good wishes and blessings. They also pray to the Lord for the care and spiritual progress of those who are in the satsang.”

Question: “Sir, do *devatas* and astral powers visit satsang everywhere?”

Master: “The status and benefits of every satsang vary depending upon the fakir or the saint in whose presence the satsang happens to be. As the saints vary in status, so does the satsang.”

Question: “Sir, why can’t we see the *devatas* and jivas of the astral plane?”

Master: “Only the subtle can realise the subtle. Like merges into like. The subtle cannot be seen with the gross senses. *Devatas* and jivas of the astral plane can be seen when the subtle vision is realised.”

Question: “Sir, if the subtle jivas cannot be seen with the gross senses, there must be some marks indicating their presence.”

Master: “Yes, when the atmosphere is quiet and the mind is tranquil and concentration is fixed, it must be assumed that the *devatas* are present amongst us. This is realised more effectively in the early morning satsang. *Devatas* largely visit satsang at that time. The morning satsang is of special significance and status.”

Question: “Sir, how long should a jiva participate in satsang?”

Master: “Till the end of one’s life. But when a jiva attains to the state of

egolessness, he is free to be or not to be in satsang. Some maintain satsang even at that stage. They would not like to forsake that which helped them in the realisation of the goal. A jiva must be in satsang until he attains egolessness. He has to continually listen to the precepts. It is not correct to assume that one need not listen to them again after having once listened to them. One must listen to these teachings until a word is firmly fixed in the mind. Repetition is the characteristic of subtlety. Until a word (idea) is firmly fixed in the mind, it must be listened to repeatedly and persistently. A sacred word—Om, Waheguru, Allah—is one word only, yet it has to be repeated for the entire life so that it is deeply fixed in the mind and is thoroughly assimilated within. Likewise, one must always be in satsang, until a permanent mark is left in the mind.”

Question: “Sir, what is to be learnt in satsang?”

Master: “In satsang, a jiva is reminded of the lessons of subtlety and universal love; he is asked to see God in everything. He has to learn a method that would help him in God realisation. He is asked to forget the past and the future and be alert in the present. He should think how to realise the Truth. Satsang is the information centre and training place for the journey to the Lord.”

Question: “Sir, are there different modes of satsang, or has it a uniform mode everywhere?”

Master: “Discourse, music and practice (*abhyas*) are the different modes of satsang. Any mode that helps in concentration is useful and might be adopted. One has to delve into the purport of what one hears, it may be in the form of a talk or music. The thought process helps in the formation of an attitude (*vritti*) and it is the attitude that ultimately triumphs.”

Question: “Sir, it has been noticed in the case of some jivas that no improvement takes place in them in spite of their regular satsang. What are the reasons for it?”

Master: “Satsang must show its effect one day or the other. When a jiva tries to assimilate and practise what he hears in satsang, he will certainly realise its benefits. But if he engages himself in vain talks after the satsang, all that he had heard in the satsang goes waste. Therefore, when a jiva comes to satsang, he must reflect on what he hears and should try to practise and follow accordingly. Otherwise, he will make a mockery of the satsang before everybody.”

Question: “Sir, could you kindly tell us explicitly the meaning of satsang?”

We shall try to assimilate that and firmly retain it in our mind.”

Master: “Satsang means association with the Truth; it may be in any form. In the absence of such association (with the Truth), even if recitations and music are organised, it cannot be called satsang. There a jiva cannot enjoy the bliss. And where recitations and music may be absent but it is just silence and it is in association with a sage who is in communion with the Truth, then that is called satsang. Association with such a sage is highly beneficial. It is in such a company that one is reminded of one’s primeval promise and one develops the urge for Self-realisation.

“I have talked enough. We may now have some music.”

Someone sang a devotional song composed by Sai Qutab Ali Shah. Then we had lunch. Thereafter, I took leave of the Master and left for Bombay.

MEETING 14

THE PATHS

(Marg)

BOMBAY 1956

The Master came to Bombay yesterday. He stayed with a devotee. This morning we went to visit a religious conference (*sadhu sammelan*). It had been arranged in a big *pandal* (tent) and the dais was beautifully decorated. There were many sadhus on the dais, some in ochre clothes and some in white. As we entered, someone among the organisers recognised the Master and offered him a seat on the dais. The Master politely declined and said, “Saints are seated there. We have come to see and to listen to them. We shall occupy some of the vacant chairs among the audience.” The organisers then proposed to put chairs for us just below the dais. The Master agreed to take seats there. The discussion was mainly on the Hindu religion. The session ended by the noon and we returned to our place in Bombay.

The evening satsang started at 4:30 p.m.

Master: (*addressing an elderly person*): “Sir, how do you propose to entertain the group this evening?”

Elderly person: “Sir, I am told that you had been to the *sadhu sammelan* this morning. Kindly tell us something about that.”

Master: “I did not meet any sadhu individually. We had taken our seats among the audience.”

Elderly person: “Sir, were there some enlightened souls among the sadhus?”

Master: “Yes, they were holy beings. Some among them were worthy of seeing. I wish you had been there. There were saints of three kinds: those on the path of action (*karma marg*), those on the path of devotion (*bhakti marg*) and those on the path of knowledge (*gyan marg*). This is what I could make out of their talks. There were also some bookish scholars.”

A devotee: “Sir, what do paths indicate? What is the meaning of a path in the spiritual realm?”

Master: “A path indicates the way for the union with the Almighty. Some people use the word ‘path’ and some others use the word ‘yoga’. ‘Yoga’

means union—union with the Eternal. Paths and yogas are the ways, the methods or the techniques for Self-realisation. There are three main paths for God realisation: Karma Marg (Yoga), Bhakti Marg (Yoga) and Gyan Marg (Yoga).”

Question: “Sir, would you kindly explain each of these three paths?”

Master: “Yes, with pleasure. Each comprises two things, but one factor is common in all the three paths. Karma Marg envisages non-attachment or dispassion (*vairagya*) and practice (*abhyas*), Bhakti Marg envisages *vairagya* and discrimination (*vivek*), and Gyan Marg envisages *vairagya* and contemplation (*vichar*). *Vairagya* is the common factor in all the paths. No path can be traversed in the absence of *vairagya* (non-attachment). Just as there are three modes of travel in the world—on land, on water and in the air—so there are three modes of travel in the spiritual realm. Karma Marg corresponds to the journey on land, bhakti marg to the journey on water and gyan marg to the journey in air. We shall now discuss them separately.

KARMA MARG: Let us see what a jiva has to practise on this path. It is the path in the realm of the gross; extroversion is its attribute and one has to work with one’s body. *Japa*, *tapa*, austerities (*vrit*), regulated life (*niyam*), wakefulness (*jagran*) and pranayama are the features of this path. The seeker on this path has to be engaged in service and live in contentment. Duality is, however, maintained on this path. The jiva retains his ego—the illusory ego or the false self and not the true self. He conceives himself as a body and, therefore, experiences pain and pleasure. The senses that are used to extroversion have to be directed inward by satsang and good company. Activity is the attribute of the senses; these senses are to be rightly directed towards spirituality.

BHAKTI MARG: Bhakti Marg and Gyan Marg are the paths of introversion. Bhakti Marg corresponds to the journey on water. It is the path of subtlety, it is the journey by the heart and one has to forget the journey by the body. It is the path of love and devotion. One has to develop love within and consume oneself in love, so that the impurities within are removed. Pain and pleasure assume the image of the Beloved and these are perceived as the gifts from the Beloved. Forgetting the ‘I’, the seeker is ever absorbed in ‘You’, and ‘You’ only. He is unaware of anything besides himself and the Beloved. When devotion fully blossoms, there remains neither ‘I’ nor ‘You’; only the Beloved exists. Being absorbed in ‘You’, the seeker loses the sense of ‘You’ and then the true self is realised and only the pure ideation remains. One

acquires even-cognition and realises that only He exists everywhere. One can have the understanding of subtlety only when one cheerfully accepts suffering and peeps within. It is the path of defame, dishonour and suffering. A jiva can get help from the gross means only up to a point. A seeker has to undertake the journey of the heart. Only he who loses ego can traverse this path.

GYAN MARG: This path corresponds to journey in air; it is the path of contemplation or reflection. It is journey by introvision. It has its relationship with the head; therefore, it is also called the journey of the head. The seeker cognises Brahm (the Absolute) universally. Pain and pleasure become non-existent. They have relationship with the body only; the self is distinct from the body. So, pain and pleasure are of no significance. Duality becomes non-existent. All other practices are condoned on this path. Concentration is the only *japa* or penance. Here, the Self is realised.”

Question: “Sir, is it necessary for a jiva to follow all the three paths to realise God, or is only one path adequate?”

Master: “A jiva must commence his journey from the point on a path where he is positioned according to his destiny—be it Karma Marg, Bhakti Marg or Gyan Marg—and observing the rules pertaining to the particular marg he will successfully complete his journey and realise God. Each path has its rules. All the paths are related to the Truth. Following any path, one can realise the Lord. But a journey undertaken sequentially on the paths is desirable and safe—first Karma Marg, then Bhakti Marg and finally Gyan Marg. Gyan is the apex.”

Question: “Sir, are the seekers of the present time only to work through the three paths, or was it so in the olden times also? Weren’t seekers in the olden times advised to progress from Karma Marg to Gyan Marg?”

Master: “Bhakti is essential in all events. It is true that in the olden times seekers used to move directly from Karma Marg into Gyan Marg. But this was in the case of yogis who used to realise Brahm by yogic powers. But they must have had traversed the path of devotion during their previous births and so they were advised to move from Karma Marg to Gyan Marg. The position of Brahm Gyani is unique and he is above all the states. A seeker can attain this state in two ways: first, he may go directly from karma into gyan, and second, he may move from karma into bhakti and then into gyan. The subtle ego arises when one moves from karma into gyan. As is the size of the step taken forward, so is the severity of the fall in the event of a slip. The fall

can be disastrous. But in case the seeker has been through the path of love and devotion where he has imbibed humility and has been relieved of ego, then the subtle ego does not arise. In the event of a slip, the damage is not serious because the seeker reverts from gyan to bhakti, that is, from the third stage to the second and not to the first.

“There are many advantages of bhakti; it fixes the seeker in the right mode and makes him forgo honour, luxuries and comforts. It keeps the seeker in the right frame, removes his impurities and purifies his mind. Love is the fire which consumes everything, except God. Gyan waits outside in the expectation that when the interior of a seeker is purified with love, it may enter there.”

Question: “Sir, when does a seeker progress from the path of love to the path of knowledge?”

Master: “Why should a seeker be worried about that? It happens in due course. At one time, Lord Krishna thought of promoting the *gopis* from bhakti marg (*saguna*; meditation of a Form) to gyan (*nirguna*; meditation of the Formless). The *gopis* had fully mastered bhakti and were totally absorbed in devotion. They were not worried about progressing to gyan. Lord Krishna, therefore, deputed Uddhava to introduce the *gopis* to gyan. It is for the seniors or elders to be concerned about that. All that a seeker has to do is to be obedient to his satguru, and learn thoroughly the lessons of devotion. In due course, *saguna* automatically attracts *nirguna* (the meditation of a Form automatically leads to the meditation of the Formless)”

Question: “Sir, you said earlier that among the sadhus, some were gyanis and some had only bookish knowledge. Does it indicate that there are two kinds of gyanis?”

Master: “One category of gyanis includes those who undertake purushartha, strive hard, abandon ego and realise the Lord. They are gyanis in the true sense. The other category includes those who study books, scan scriptures, and gain knowledge. This knowledge is bookish and not genuine, it is scholarly and intellectual. The scholars can neither bear suffering nor accept dishonour and condemnation. They like to be neat and safe and decently maintained. When a scholar has to go through a test, he fails. A true gyani is not like that. He is always in equilibrium and to him pain and pleasure are always alike. There is a vast difference between the two.

“Once a fakir in ochre clothes came to Bedil¹. Bedil asked him, ‘Sir, who are you?’ The visitor said, ‘I am what you are.’ Bedil asked him the same

question the second time and the third time, and each time he got the same reply from the visitor. Then Bedil said, ‘Sir there is a vast difference. Can you give a proof of what you say?’ The visitor said, ‘You may ask for any?’ Bedil took the visitor to the river bank and proposed that they might ask someone to throw both of them into the river and then the proof would follow. The visitor said, ‘I know that the people living along the river bank know swimming. You, too, must be a swimmer and would swim back to the bank. I do not know swimming and shall be drowned.’ Then Bedil said, ‘Let us ask someone to tie huge stone slabs to our feet and throw us into the river. He who sees *one* in everything and really knows that *I* and *you* are *one* will swim back, and he who merely talks and is without personal realisation will be drowned.’ The visitor fell at the feet of Bedil, sought apology and vowed that he would not make tall talks any more. The visitor in ochre clothes had not traversed the path; he merely talked. Such persons are merely scholars and boast of being gyanis.”

1 a well-known Sufi saint of Sind

Question: “Sir, how much time does a seeker take to complete a path?”

Master: “No time limit is fixed. That depends on the interest and zeal of the seeker. As is the intensity of the urge for Self-realisation, so is the rate of progress. Bearing sufferings and ordeals, he reaches the goal quickly.”

Question: “Sir, can a seeker traverse all the paths in a single birth?”

Master: “Why not? There have been instances, though rare. In such cases, it may be assumed that such a jiva had undergone strivings etc in his previous births, and so his actions in the present birth are so efficacious that with a little purushartha, he attains the goal quickly.

“If a seeker completes one path in a birth, that by itself is a commendable achievement. A seeker has to attain proficiency on the path where he happens to be by virtue of his past deeds.”

It was now time for dinner and we dispersed.

MEETING 15

HATHA YOGA

(Physical Penance)

BOMBAY 9 May, 1954

The Master was on a visit to a devotee in Bombay. It was morning. We were sitting in a room. Devotional music was going on. Presently, there was a knock on the door and a sadhu in ochre clothes came in. Seeing him, the Master got up and greeted him with folded hands. He was offered a chair.

The Master gently enquired of the host as to who the visitor was. The host replied, “Sir, while I was living in a suburb of Bombay many sadhus used to visit my house and I used to honour them all. When I shifted to Bombay, this sadhu found me out and he now visits me occasionally. He comes for about fifteen minutes, receives oblation and goes away.” The sadhu was offered a breakfast. After he had finished it, the Master engaged him in conversation and the fact came out that the sadhu practised *hatha* yoga and had mastered many yogic practices. He had practised pranayama in various ways. He narrated, with a sense of pride, the occult powers he had acquired with yogic practices. We were astonished to hear him. Shortly, the sadhu took leave and went away. One of the devotees who had been listening with keen interest put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, the sadhu talked of great things and narrated his achievement with a sense of pride. Isn’t that a sign of ego? But, sir, you have always stressed that on the spiritual path, one must annihilate the ego and that one has to conceal what one has attained. But, here, we saw something to the contrary.”

Master: “You are right. but the sadhu is a *hatha yogi*.”

Question: “Sir, are such things permissible to the followers of *hatha* yoga? Is *hatha* yoga a technique? What kind of yoga is it?”

Master: “*Hatha* yoga¹ is a kind of yoga and it includes breath control (pranayama). It is a primary practice and has to be undertaken in the beginning. It includes mastery of a posture and inhaling, holding and exhaling breath, etc so that the breath is merged in the Primordial Breath.

Once the merger is attained, a jiva can do many wonders.

1 *Hatha* yoga: The word *hatha* is made up of *ha*+*tha*. *Ha* represents the Sun and *tha* represents the Moon. The hot breath that is exhaled is called *prana* and it represents the Sun. The cool breath that is inhaled is called *apana* and it represents the Moon. As long as *prana* and *apna* remain distinct, they continue to attract each other, owing to which the existence of the body is maintained. When *prana* leaves, the jiva dies. But a yogi unites *prana* and *apana* in the *sushumna* vein, through *pranayama*, and thus he attains *samadhi*. *Hatha* yoga is the practice, or the union that is attained by *pranayama* or breath control.

“During my pilgrimages, I have seen many *hatha yogis* doing wonders. I am reminded of an episode. We had gone to Benaras. There, we heard of a brahmin who was said to be an expert in *hatha* yoga. We went to see him. When we reached there, the brahmin had just returned from his bath in the Ganga. After greeting us, he enquired about the purpose of our visit. We told him that on hearing of his reputation we had come to see his demonstration of *pranayama*. Initially, he put us off. But looking at me he said, ‘Your forehead indicates something different. For your sake, I shall show you.’

“He was so adept in *pranayama* that when he fixed his breath in any part of his body, that part became hard like a piece of iron. Filling the *prana* in his abdomen, he asked each one of us to stand on his abdomen. As we got on to it we felt as if we were standing on a piece of iron. Then he filled breath in the other parts of his body and each part became hard like a piece of iron. We were wonderstruck to see it. After finishing his demonstration, he said that in the previous year he had attended a conference organised by the Arya Samaj. The session was presided over by a lady, who in her speech said that there was a time when great heroes like Bhima lived in India, but in the present there was none like them. Being provoked by these remarks, he went up to the dais and shouted that heroes like Bhima were still there in India. He then challenged any individual or a group of individuals to bend his arm in which he would fix his breath. He did that and many among the audience attempted to bend his arm, but all failed. He then announced that the knowledge of yoga still existed in India and there were many who were masters in this science. Talking of his guru, he said that his guru could stop a train with the powers of his yoga.

“When we were about to leave the place, the brahmin asked each one of us for oblations (*dakshina*). He said that he did not want material oblations;

what he wanted as an oblation was a vow not to tell a lie in the future. He asked us to hold the holy water of Ganga in the cups of our palms and take the oath. He started pouring the holy water in our hands. When he came to me, I stopped him. I told him that being a doctor (physician) I had to appear in the court of law as a medical witness. While making my statements, I had always thought that I was speaking the truth. But at times my friends subsequently told me that some of my statements were not right. Occasionally, my statement was not found correct, though it was unintentional. I, then, told him (the brahmin) that I would take the oath, provided he assured me that on such an occasion he would guard me and prevent me from telling a lie. With a smile, he said that it would not be possible for him. I told him that in that case it would not be possible for me to take the oath. Hearing me, all my associates also said that it would not be possible for them to take the oath. Before leaving his place, I said to the brahmin in his ear, ‘Sir, your display has been wonderful. Could you kindly tell me whether you move your breath with *shabd* or without *shabd*?’ He asked me, ‘What is that?’ I asked him if he had received *gurushabd* and used it with his breath. He replied in the negative. I then said to him, ‘Sir, if you had moved your breath with *gurushabd*, you would have attained to a wonderful state.’

Question: “Sir, the brahmin could acquire such astonishing powers and control over his breath, even though he did not move the breath with *shabd*. What more could he have gained, had he practised pranayama with *shabd*? Are there two types of pranayama: without *shabd* and with *shabd*?”

Master: “Yes, there are two types of pranayama. In one case the breath is moved without *shabd* and in the other the breath is accompanied with *shabd*. In both the cases, however, the breath is united with the Primordial Breath, and a great power is acquired because of this. One who practises without *shabd* uses the power in the direction of *anatma* (the unreal), and one who practises with *shabd* uses the power in the direction of *Atma* (Truth). When the power is directed towards *anatma*, physical strength is acquired, health improves and one can work wonders, as was the case with the brahmin. One earns applause and publicity, and then the subtle ego arises and one suffers a great deal. This is the realm of the unreal (*asat*). To use it in the direction of *Atma* is marvellous. The power thus generated helps in the discovery of the hidden treasures within and one progresses in the direction of the Lord. This is the path of the Truth. There is a vast difference between the two practices.”

Question: “Sir, it is known that a person practising pranayama acquires occult powers, besides the physical strength. Are occult powers acquired in both the modes of pranayama?”

Master: “Occult powers are acquired in both the cases whether pranayama is practised with or without shabd. There are various occult powers.”

Question: “Sir, is it right to work miracles with occult powers?”

Master: “Not at all. It is disastrous to work miracles. A fakir is not concerned with miracles. They are forbidden. A fakir is desireless whereas the occult powers promote desires. Desires drag a person towards the phenomenon or the unreal. A jiva has to be desireless on the spiritual path. All desires, except of God-realisation, are inadmissible. Whereas a jiva ought to be directed towards Atma, desires drag him to the realm of the unreal (*anatma*).”

A devotee: “Sir, we have read that in the olden times, people could fly with the powers of yoga. There are references to people flying into the solar region or the lunar region. There are also references of this kind in *Sri Yoga Vasishtha*. These, too, are occult powers.”

Master: “These powers are acquired through yoga. In those days, yoga was the first lesson for a seeker. It included learning to fly, so that a seeker could fly to a silent spot and be engaged in meditation there, or to a satsang of his choice. The other part of training envisaged how to get freedom from hunger and thirst. It included the opening of the palate-orifice, with yogic practices, through which drops of nectar fall on the tongue, and then hunger and thirst disappear. In those days people had very long life and, therefore, they were taught yoga which took a hundred years. Now the life-span is short and there is no time to learn yoga. Therefore, Bhakti Marg has been recommended in the present time.”

Question: “Sir, we have heard that some fakirs dismember their bodies into pieces and then reassemble them into the original form. Is it done with the help of pranayama?”

Master: “Yes, I have also heard of such cases. Once a friend of mine (in Rohri town) had to catch an early morning train. On the previous evening he had engaged a *tonga* (horse-carriage) to pick him up from his residence and take him to the railway station. The *tonga* arrived late. When my friend asked the coachman the reasons for the delay, he reported an unusual happening on the way. As he was bringing the carriage, it ran over something. It was dark and he got down to see what had happened. He was alarmed to see the body

of a person lying in pieces. Suddenly, the pieces started moving and assembling, and there stood up Fakir Mehmood Shah. I have heard of some more instances of this nature. But sages do not give credit for this sort of performance. It is not the path to God. The path to God is still ahead of it. One has to lose ego to realise God.”

A devotee: “Sir, I have a few questions to ask. Could you kindly permit it?”

Master: “Yes, gladly.”

Question: “Sir, you have said that great powers are attained when the breath merges into the Primordial Breath. What is that Primordial Breath?”

Master: “Ordinarily, the breath is in the gross state. It keeps moving. With practice, the gross breath is turned into subtle, and eventually it becomes so subtle that it merges into the Primordial Breath. The Primordial Breath is the universal breath and is the only breath being taken by all in the universe—human beings, birds, beasts, insects etc. These are matters to be realised and cannot be verbally described. Yes, the next question.”

Question: “Sir, while talking about *hatha* yoga, you mentioned inhaling, exhaling and holding the breath. We have heard about inhaling and exhaling of the breath, but what is the holding of the breath?”

Master: “Between inhaling and exhaling, there is the intermediary state. The breath is to be held in that state, or we can say that it is to be given a recess, that is, the breath neither comes in nor goes out. This is the state of supreme significance. It is also called the junction state.

“There are also the junction states between the day and the night—the dawn in the morning when the Sun is rising but it is not yet the day, and the twilight in the evening when the Sun is setting but it is not yet the night. These two periods are the most suitable and highly beneficial for practice.

“Likewise, there are the junction states between inhalation and exhalation. The realisation of the junction state in the breath, or staying in that state, brings about immense benefits. A seeker is able to derive so much pleasure out of it that all other worldly pleasures appear insignificant in comparison with that pleasure. He then desires to remain in that state as far as possible. The more he stays in that state, the more bliss he enjoys. He earns immense benefits through it.”

Question: “Sir, one more question. You said earlier that pranayama is the primary practice, that is, it has to be followed at the beginning stage. Does it imply that after leaving that, one has to undertake some other practices? But according to some, pranayama is to be practised from the beginning to the

end. Will you kindly elucidate?”

Master: “Some do believe that pranayama is to be practised from the beginning to the end. But it is not correct. Pranayama is a primary practice and it has to be undertaken only at the earlier stages. Why should a seeker adhere to the primary practice as he progresses further? In due course, the earlier practice seems to be a child’s play and he is not drawn towards it. He follows other practices as he progresses further. After completing the journey on land, he undertakes the journey on water and then in the air.”

Question: “Sir, does it imply that the practice of pranayama ends for ever for him?”

Master: “What is the purpose of pranayama? It is undertaken for self-discipline. Once it is realised, the practice is of no more use. Let us take an example. You have to go abroad. You travel by car up to a port to board a ship. The car drops you at the port and it has served its purpose. Will you still continue to sit in the car? You have to go abroad and the car cannot take you there. Naturally, you have to seek the other means for your purpose. You then board a ship, while the car may continue to be at its place. (You know about the availability of the car and you can use it whenever you desire). Similarly, it is with regard to pranayama. With practice it becomes natural and automatic like a wheel which continues to move for some time when it has been put in motion. Once the breath has been regulated, it becomes a habit or a natural process and not an endeavour. Once it has served its purpose, one does not have to worry about that practice. There is no harm in leaving it at a further stage. Any more questions?”

The devotee: “No, sir.”

Master: “Practices are needed until love (*ishq*) grows within. Once love arises, what practice would be needed then? Everything ends. Then love makes the seeker act. When one is possessed with love and the mind is directed to God, then all exercises of the intellect come to a halt. Practices, exercises, endeavours are needed only in the beginning; when love dawns, the lover works automatically. He is then unaware of whether he is working at all. He has no awareness of the activities. He is all the time absorbed in his spirit.”

The Master then asked someone to start devotional music. He sang the following song:

That is my suffering, O! friends,

The breath is away from the Beloved.
I do not like the breath
That maintains separation.
That is my anxiety, O! friends,
The breath is away from the Beloved.
That breath is pleasing
That moves with the Beloved,
And my mind accepts that.
Breath without the Beloved
Is a treasure lost,
Whom shall I tell my grief!
The breath is away from the Beloved.
Peep in, O! Qutab¹,
You will see the beloved Self,
And be doing this for ever.

1 the Revered Master, Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah

It was eleven o'clock and the time to leave the place. The Master alongwith some devotees left to visit another devotee.

I and a friend of mine, who lived in my neighbourhood and who was an old associate of the Master, left for our homes. Referring to the Master's thoroughness in pranayama, my friend said: "Hardly anybody can match the Master in pranayama. Though he himself is a householder, many a *sanyasi* (hermit, recluse) has come to him for guidance. Once a *sanyasi* from Kashi came to our town (Rohri, Sind). Hearing the reputation of the Master, he came to him and said, 'Sir, though I can raise the breath to the tenth outlet, yet I have not attained *ananda* (bliss). Having heard your reputation, I have come to you for guidance so that I may attain *ananda*.' As it was his temperament to avoid publicity and to remain unknown, the Master tried to evade him. But, when he insisted, the Master taught him how to raise the breath from the toe and give it out through the tenth outlet in the head. After receiving adequate training, the *sanyasi* took leave of the Master. While leaving, he said that he had been astonished when the Master gave him the first demonstration. Though he had been at Uttar Kashi, Swarg Ashram (Rishi Kesh) etc he had seen nobody so adept in pranayama.

“Talking about the Master, Sai Roshan Ali Shah, the eldest son and spiritual successor to Sai Qutab Ali Shah said, ‘Rochaldas has practised pranayama so intensely that if someone else were to do that, his head would burst. Since his *murshid* (satguru, preceptor) is perfect, and he helps him, he is able to undertake very hard practices.’

“Recently, a *yogi* came to the Master and proposed to teach him some difficult practices of pranayama. The Master, who is ever ready to learn, immediately agreed. When the *yogi* started giving him demonstrations, the Master instantly did these and further showed him certain other practices which the *yogi* had not seen previously. The *yogi* had come to teach but had to learn instead.

“The Master often says that one who is engaged in the practice of pranayama must have physical strength and at the same time the body must be light. His advice is—that the seekers practising pranayama must eat less, speak less and sleep less. When he was engaged in this practice, for months together he used to eat only once a day and that, too, during the day and not in the evening. He says that silence promotes energy which is otherwise wasted in speaking. He stresses celibacy very much. He says that petrol is the fuel that helps an aeroplane to fly; likewise pranayama envisages flying and hence the importance of celibacy. Though he was married, he observed celibacy and so he became adept in pranayama. About sleeplessness, he says that it promotes subtlety. He asks why Majnu loved Laila. Laila was black; in Arabic ‘Laila’ means night. ‘Majnu’ means crazy or lover. The lovers are crazy about night, and night is black. He who is crazy about night, that is, who forgoes sleep or remains awake at night, is a lover. Love means loss of sleep. Nobody ever becomes a lover without the loss of sleep.

“The Master also says that yoga is a discipline, a regulation. Bhakti is disciplined when it is associated with yoga, and does not remain merely emotional or chaotic, as it sometimes tends to be. Yoga becomes sweet and gentle when it is associated with bhakti; by itself, yoga tends to be dry and without bliss. Further, ego arises in yoga. The seeker is always mindful of his achievements. Bhakti teaches him surrender—surrender of his achievements to Lord Krishna. He is saved from the subtle ego. Yoga is discipline and bhakti is sweetness; when the two are combined, that becomes a wonderful thing.”

When I reached home, I felt elated and delighted to have learnt so much about yoga and the Master.

MEETING 16

METHODS AND CONDUCT

SHANTI NAGAR 30 May, 1954

I arrived at Shanti Nagar in the morning. The Master was sitting in a chair in the open courtyard and some devotees were sitting on benches around him. The Master was talking to the group.

Master: “I find a very old man coming to the satsang. Quite often I have thought of talking to him. He comes here when the satsang is in progress and leaves before the satsang ends. Perhaps due to his poor eyesight he prefers to leave early. I like his posture and attitude. It seems that he has been in good company. Has anyone amongst you talked to him and sought his introduction? The elders have many virtues. When there is a newcomer, we must greet him and seek his introduction.”

As the Master was talking, the old man was seen entering the courtyard. I remarked, “Look, sir, it seems that the old man has a long life. You have just talked about him and he has arrived.”

“O! yes. Please go and help him in,” the Master said.

Someone in the group got up and helped the old man come in. The Master, too, got up and went forward to receive him. As the old man tried to bow down to touch the Master’s feet, the Master held his hands and said, “Welcome, sir, welcome. We were just talking about you and you have arrived.” The Master then offered him a chair by his side. He was also served with some refreshments. Then the Master said to him, “It is so kind of you to come to us early in the morning. I am very pleased.”

The old man was stirred with emotion to see the welcome and affection shown by the Master. He then spoke to the Master, beginning with a couplet in Sindhi.

Old man: “There are still the enlightened in *kaliyuga*,
Always in pursuit of God realisation,
Practising constantly, are ever in silence,
They love so intensely, O! Roshan¹,
The thirst of the mind is quenched.

“Sir, I have always been longing to come and meet you. But because of old age and the problem of cataract of both the eyes, I have difficulty in walking. Therefore, I leave the satsang early. But since last night I had been feeling an intense longing to meet you. So I have come this morning. I am greatly privileged to meet you. Seeing you, I am reminded of my satguru.”

Master: “Where did your satguru live?”

Old man: “He was the sage of Kandri (Sind). Sir, during my youth, I was always fond of visiting the dargahs of fakirs, and I had the privilege of being in the company of some saints. I had also visited the Dargah of your Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah. I had met his son Sai Roshan Ali Shah and grandson Sai Hadi Baksh. They were wonderful personalities. I feel sorry that although I had lived at Hyderabad (Sind), I did not come to know of Sai Qutab Ali Shah. I wish I had remained in his company, too, for some time.”

Master: “Yes, the Revered Master did not allow people to collect around him. There used to be only a few of us around him. There used to be silence, and silence only around him or at times some devotional music. Such was his volition (*sankalpa*) that though people in numbers used to come to stroll in the evenings on the hillock overlooking his dwelling, none would come down the hillock to his place. He had kept himself very much away from the folk. Had his will been otherwise, the entire city of Hyderabad would have been at his feet. He had, however, said that after him, buildings would rise at that place and people would come in large numbers. And it so happened. By himself, he was the lord of anonymity and always kept himself concealed.”

Old man: “Sir, that used to be the life-style of saints in those days, unlike the saints of the present day who on getting only a little realisation, invite large publicity in the media.”

Master: “Yes, you are correct. Why should a fakir be concerned with publicity and mob gatherings? The fakirs have willfully earned defame and disrepute. They consider disrepute a safety device so that in the absence of mobs they ever remain busy with the Beloved.

“It is said that once big mobs started collecting around Fakir Shah Rakhal of Miyani (Sind). People started following him in large numbers. To save himself from this disturbance, the fakir invited a prostitute and putting his one arm around her and taking a bottle of wine in his other hand he walked

with her through the bazars of the town of Sukkur (Sind). On the way, he would take a sip from the bottle and then ask the woman to have a sip with him. People were shocked to see this episode. Everybody started talking ill of him. People stopped gathering around him except, however, a few selected devotees. The fakir heaved a sigh of relief. Anonymity is wonderful. Love survives only in secrecy. By the grace of God I had met since my childhood such seasoned fakirs who avoided wealth and comforts and loved suffering and solitude. That was their way of life. Saintliness means a way of life, or else it is fake. I am grateful to the Lord for my association with such saints.”

Old man: “Sir, I am stirred with emotion when I think of their lives. The fakirs had neither an outer guise, nor did they give sermons.”

Master: “They were so much absorbed in the Beloved that they had no leisure to attend to these things. Saintliness means ‘living’ and not guise or sermons. A seeker on this path must abandon everything and seek such a method and way of life that his relationship with the Lord may remain unbroken and everlasting.”

Question: “Sir, dervishes do give sermons. Is it admissible in some cases and inadmissible in others?”

Master: “It is admissible only in those cases that have been commissioned by the Lord, and not in other cases. The words of those who speak under a command of the Lord, are highly potent. Utterances arising merely out of studies and intellect are not potent and effective. Those who have been commissioned by the Lord, have a wonderful life-style. But those who are wanting in conduct or life-style and merely deliver sermons, deserve no credit.”

A devotee: “Sir, I have a friend who is well read and speaks very well. As regards his living.....”

Master (interrupting him): “O dear, one must not speak ill of anybody. A jiva may be a learned man or a scholar, or he may be advanced in bhakti (devotion) and gyan, but if he is wanting in conduct or life-style, he will come to grief. What is the value of utterances? What is needed is the purity of mind.”

Question: “Sir, what are the reasons that some jivas fail to develop the right way of life in spite of their *japa*, *tapa* and austerities?”

Master: “To merely engage oneself in practice or to undertake *japa*, *tapa* and austerities is not enough by itself. Many persons recite Rama, Rama, Rama, but there are ways to remember Rama. As someone has said:

*Rama, Rama sabh koi kahe,
Kahane ka vichar,
Vohi Rama sadhu kahe,
Vohi sakal sansar.*

[Everyone remembers Rama (God)
But there are ways to remember God,
Saints remember the same word,
That the entire world remembers.]

“It shows that there is a way and a requirement following which sadhus remember Rama, Rama. What is that way or the prerequisite? It is concentration. If concentration is wanting, the practice is ineffective howsoever one may practise. Practice with concentration is the right method. In addition, a seeker has to observe some more points. It is only by correctly understanding and imbibing those instructions that a seeker can realise the correct way or style of life. Failing this, he attains nothing, whatever be his efforts and strivings.”

Question: “Sir, how is a jiva benefited by his conduct or life-style?”

Master: “Life-style is of immense importance, it helps a lot. When a jiva follows the correct life-style, his behaviour undergoes a sea change. He becomes the Self, and when he undergoes this change he enjoys bliss within, he becomes happy and his enthusiasm for spiritual progress is enhanced. He remains unshaken and undisturbed. He attains stability and is not affected by ups and downs.”

Question: “Sir, you mention about methods and conduct. Do the two words have different connotations? Could you kindly explain the difference?”

Master: “Yes, there is a vast difference. ‘Methodology’ means the ‘technique, procedure, approach, regulations’. Here I am reminded of a lyric by the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah. I shall quote a line out of that.

‘Learn all the methods to realise the Beloved.’

“It says that a seeker must learn the ways, the subtleties, the techniques. Adopting the right approach or technique, one has to march on the spiritual path. When a seeker adopts the right techniques, and also the right conduct or life-style, he succeeds in his love.”

Question: “Sir, you have said that practice with concentration is the right approach or technique. You have also said that, in addition, a seeker has to

observe a few more things. What are the additional requirements?”

Master: “The additional requirements vary according to the stage of the seeker. There are specific requirements for seekers on the path of action (*karma marg*). These are illustrated in a lyric by Shah Abdul Latif. Requesting a messenger (*qasid*) to carry his message to his beloved, Shah Sahib says:

Take a page, and write for me,
If you can carry it to my beloved;
Say exactly as I tell you,
You must not delay on the way;
With humility and gentle speech,
Bow to the beloved, and say,
‘I am truly thy slave,
Kindly deny me not thy grace.’

“Shah Sahib is asking the messenger to take a book and write on it the message to be carried to the beloved, lest he should forget it. He is told to do exactly as he is asked and must not slow down or delay on the way. He must continually move with no respite. When he arrives in the presence of the beloved, he must present himself with the utmost humility like a subordinate and submit in a very sweet voice, the message that ‘I am truly thy slave, kindly deny me not thy grace.’

“This is the literal meaning of what Shah Sahib wanted to say. Let us now see the true meaning or the purport of what Shah Sahib has said. Shah Sahib is giving five instructions which a seeker has to fully assimilate. These are not merely to be read or known or understood, these have to be imbibed or firmly fixed in the mind and must not be forgotten at all. These are: (1) You must practise guruhabd exactly as you have been instructed. (2) There must not be either any break in the practice or laziness at any stage. You must adhere fast to the rules. This is the path of unceasing march. Complacency is not admissible. (3) Your relationship with your satguru should be that of a subordinate or as of a servant to his master. You must fully observe respect, courtesy, politeness and humility. You must serve your satguru earnestly and with dedication. (4) You must not hope for your progress unless your satguru accepts you as his own. You must surrender to him everything that you consider to be your own. You must surrender your possessions (wealth), body

and mind. When you relieve yourself of all these, then only you will be worthy of spiritual progress. (5) Having done these, do not assume that you have done everything. Much is still wanted, and that is his grace. His grace is of immense power and you must ever crave that.

“In this couplet, Shah Sahib has described the requirements of the path of action. These may be summarised in one word: *reverence*. Reverence is the rule and the essence of the path of action, and it is the method or the technique on this path. Reverence includes humility, service, faith in the words of the guru, etc. It is the central point on this path. Success on this path depends on reverence.”

Question: “Sir, what is the method or technique on the bhakti marg?”

Master: “This, too, has been explained by Shah Sahib in one of his poems. He says:

If you have learnt to love,
Fear not the cross,
Let people not know
Your cravings for the beloved,
Conceal your sufferings,
With vows to the Lord.

“Suffering is the natural happening or an outcome on the path of love. This is the path of suffering. Suffering is the main feature of the path of love. But you must not groan, grumble or complain. You should presume that these are the gifts to you from the beloved. Do not allow others to have an inkling of what you perceive in them. Preserve your sufferings within, with vows to the Lord. If you fail to do that, your love will not last for long. Shah Sahib has also said, ‘None has realised God without suffering.’ Suffering and Sai (God) are identical. What is the purpose of suffering? Sufferings help in the purification of the mind. These are the gifts from the beloved, these are sent by Him and are His aspects. Accept them cheerfully. Sufferings are bestowed upon you for your progress. He loves you, so he gives you the cross to bear. Do not publicise your sufferings. Do not grumble. Never speak ill of your beloved. You must not expose your sufferings. Conceal them, but with patience, contentment and pleasure. When you succeed in that, love will arise within you. It is only then that a seeker can traverse the path of love. The requirements of this path may be summarised in one word: *secrecy, privacy*

or *concealment*.”

Question: Sir, could you also explain the methods on the path of knowledge (gyan marg)?”

Master: “This, too, has been explained by Shah Sahib in a poem:

When I peeped within,
And talked to myself,
I saw no country,
Nor folks nor relatives.
Sufferings had existed,
Until I was a lover,
And all sufferings vanished,
As I realised myself as the Beloved.

“The literal meaning of the poem is: As long as I conceived myself as the lover, I had to wander from country to country in search of the Beloved, and to beseech friends, relatives and people to help me to find and meet the Beloved. But as I peeped within I was surprised to find that I myself was the Beloved and had been wandering everywhere in vain. Then there remained neither the lover (or the seeker) nor the countries to wander about, nor the helpers and the relatives. Nothing but the Beloved remained.

“The true meaning or the purport of the poem is: As long as I was aware of the self, or had an ego, or maintained duality, or conceived the Lord as distinct from myself, there existed the world and suffering. I had assumed myself to be a body with mind, intelligence and speech. But when I followed introvision and annihilated the self, then I realised that ‘I’ was the one I had been seeking. The lover and the beloved are one. Only He pervades everywhere, all the time, and there exists nothing but He.

“This must be the attitude, approach, perception and disposition of the seeker at all times, in all modes of activity, and not merely when he is engaged in practice. Abandoning the ideas of the self (ego), he must be absolutely firm in that disposition. For him there exist neither friends nor foes, neither pain nor pleasure. He is neither body nor mind, nor intelligence nor speech; he is distinct from all these. He has to be absorbed in the Divine Spirit. It is Truth only, and Truth everywhere.”

Question: “Sir, you have told us about the methods of the saints. When can a seeker abide by these rules?”

Master: “It is only when a seeker accepts suffering with zeal and cheer. As he practises along these lines, the natural instinct then arises in him, he gains the insight about what to do and when, and also the courage. At that stage, he is complimented and congratulated by all in nature.”

Old man: “Sir, where are the seekers now who will accept the cross, strive and struggle, and follow the right mode of living? These days there is neither the spirit of reverence nor the inclination for anonymity. Everyone wants to publicise himself as a saint.”

Master: “What shall we call the seekers of today? To put it simply, they are lazy. With a little realisation, they get inflated and call themselves fakirs. Who is there to accept suffering and disrepute? Seekers in the olden days had great achievements. These days, seekers can hardly absorb or digest ordinary achievements. Seekers in the past could conceal oceans within. Saintliness is not an easy path.

“Who is a fakir (saint)? A fakir has three attributes:

(1) He is not attached to a place. (2) He is desireless. (3) He totally depends upon God. If one has not passed these tests, I shall give him no credit, no matter if he can fly in the sky. For such a person, saintliness is a distant task.”

Question: “Sir, everybody feels that only he, and not anyone else, is following the right mode of living. What is the reason for this attitude? How can one know that one has adopted the right way of living for saintliness?”

Master: “A seeker must constantly watch within to find out where he stands. If he has adopted the right mode of living, then, as a proof, he will perceive the living of others like his own. Or his living must be certified by the wise (the satguru). Failing these, he must presume that he has yet to achieve the desired mode of living. How, then, can he influence others? One must improve one’s own way of life; one must not mind other’s ways of living.”

Question: “Sir, is there a common measure or standard of living? Are all seekers required to follow a common pattern? Or, do different seekers receive different instructions from their preceptors?”

Master: “How can there be a common measure? Nature comprises three attributes—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Therefore, jivas vary in temperaments. Hence every jiva receives instructions individually. Besides, each one has a specific mission assigned by the Lord, and he receives instructions accordingly which he is required to follow. Let us take an example. Sri Ramchandra was incarnated to establish the code of conduct. Sri Krishna

disregarded the code of conduct. He was the incarnation of love. Reasoning has no place in love. Morals are associated with intelligence. We may also take the example of the Gurus (the lineage of Guru Nanak). All were divine and godly, and perfect. Yet each one in the lineage had his own way of living, because each one had a different divine role or divine command. Obeying the divine commands, they remained firm on their paths.”

It was now time for lunch. The old man sought permission of the Master to leave, but on insistence by the Master, he stayed on for the day.

MEETING 17

ON TAKING LIBERTIES

SHANTI NAGAR 27 *June, 1954*

It was the time for satsang when I arrived here. The Master was sitting in a chair and the devotees were sitting in front, as usual. As I took my seat and looked around, I noticed a change. Musical instruments were put at the place where the scriptures used to be. A group of singers had arrived from somewhere, so it had been decided that there would be devotional music instead of readings from the scriptures on that day.

The singers first sang two songs of Sai Qutab Ali Shah and then of Sachal Sarmast and Bedil Fakir. After that, they sang a song composed by Sadiq Fakir. It said:

God is supreme,
Never bid defiance to Him,
He is the ruler,
He holds command,
And executes His will.
Death is inevitable,
It destroys,
And continues to destroy,
The wise have said the truth:
Death spares none.
Listen, O Sadiq,
Death is ever engaged in destruction.

When the song was finished a singer made a request to the Master.

Singer: “Sir, the devotees living here are fortunate in that they always listen to the nectar-like words of the Master. We have come from outside and have an intense longing to listen to the Master. To us, this is a rare opportunity. Sir, may we have the privilege of listening to the Master so that we, too, may earn bliss.”

Master: “As you say. The theme of your last song was:

God is supreme,

Never bid defiance to Him.

“This lyric has been composed by Sadiq Fakir. He was a very good saint. His poems are surcharged with anguish and sorrow. The status of his compositions is so high that at the Urs (annual festival) at Jhok Shareef (Sind), the celebrations start with the singing of one of his poems and then the singing of the poems of other saints follows.

“Do you know who Sadiq was? Initially, he was a bandit. He was always engaged in plunder. One day, the saint of Jhok Shareef—Sai Fazal Allah Shah Qalandar—was travelling with a group of disciples. On the way, they had to pass through a forest. As they reached there, one of the disciples said, ‘Sir, this forest is the abode of the notorious bandit Sadiq. He would not spare us.’ The saint replied, ‘We have nothing to be robbed of? If Sadiq comes, he won’t come to rob, but to be robbed. Let him come.’ And it happened like that. Soon Sadiq with his gang of bandits arrived there. The saint was in meditation. When Sadiq shouted at him, the saint raised his head and as he looked into his eyes, Sadiq fell down at the feet of the saint. For a while, he was unconscious. The saint blessed him merely by glancing at him (*nazar nihāl kar diya*). Sadiq turned into a fakir and was considered a fakir of a high order.

“Once while Sadiq was sitting before his murshid (preceptor, satguru), the murshid said, ‘It is now time for me to leave the world.’ Sadiq said, ‘Sir, how can that be possible? We shall not allow you to leave. When death comes, I shall chain it to the leg of my cot.’ The murshid asked him, ‘How and from where did you get this power?’ Sadiq replied, ‘Sir, from you.’ The murshid then said, ‘Can’t I do that myself? But no. We have to abide by the rules of nature. What has come into being must disappear. The transient cannot be everlasting.’ But Sadiq was adamant and he insisted that he would not allow Death to come near his murshid. Then the murshid said, ‘Allah is perfect intelligence. Suppose Sadiq is not here at that time, then what?’ Sadiq said, ‘Sir, how can that be? I am here with you all the time.’

“The time passed and Sadiq forgot the incident. He had to go to his village for some work. The murshid left his mortal frame in his absence. Sadiq was severely shocked when he got the news. He mourned very pathetically. Rolling in dust and wailing he came to Jhok Shareef. He lamented intensely. On the way he sang the song:

God is supreme,
Never bid defiance to Him.

“He felt very sorry for having asserted himself before his murshid. Foolishly, he had shown vanity and taken liberty with his murshid, with the consequence that he was denied the privilege of being in the presence of his murshid at the last moment. God is supreme. He can be stern even with saints like Sadiq. A seeker must take no liberty with his master. It is extremely harmful.”

A devotee: “Sir, it was out of his intense love for his preceptor, and not for any other reason that Sadiq took liberty with him.”

Master: “Saintliness is the path of total negation and not of assertion of the self. We do not question his love. But he asserted his will and capacity before his preceptor. That was an act of disrespect and he had to face a penalty for that. He had to face separation from his satguru towards the end for which he had to lament and repent intensely.”

Question: “Sir, situations arise in one’s life when one has to make a request to one’s satguru. What should a seeker do in such a situation?”

Master: “It would be better if a seeker does not ask his satguru for anything. Only one request is admissible, and that is spiritual progress, and nothing else. But if at all a seeker has to ask for anything, it must be done with utmost humility. The decision of acceding to the request must be left to the satguru.

All I can do is to cry,
It is for the beloved to listen.

The seeker’s job is to call, crave, cry, request, and submit. The decision rests with the satguru. It depends on his mercy whether to accede to the request and in case it is not accepted, one must not dictate to the satguru or take liberties with him. It is very harmful to force one’s will on the satguru.

“A seeker must have the firm faith that he to whom he has surrendered, will not disfavour him, and that what he (satguru) ordains is for his (seeker’s) good.

“It is said that Hazrat Musa was loved by the Lord. Once he took liberty with the Lord and asked Him to show His glamour. The Lord tried to dissuade him from making such a request saying that he would not be able to withstand the intensity of the glamour. The gross senses cannot bear the

impact of the glamour. One needs the inner (subtle) eye for this kind of vision. But Hazrat Musa was adamant and taking liberty with the Lord questioned, 'Am I not your beloved?' Very reluctantly, the Lord accepted his demand. When the glamour was shown, Musa's eyes could not bear the intensity of the light and they got closed. He became unconscious. He was not internally ready for that sort of vision or experience.

"Musa had assumed obstinacy and taken liberty to see the Divine Light with his gross senses. Instead of seeing the glamour, he became unconscious. The grace of the Divine Light was wasted and he had to suffer a great harm, and remained ill for some time.

"Next time Hazrat Musa demanded that like God, he, too, should be able to create human beings. The Lord tried very much to dissuade him from making this demand but Musa would not yield. Eventually, God agreed to concede his demand with a rider that the human being created by him would remain conscious as long as he (Musa) kept looking at it. Musa agreed to the condition. He created a human being and it could function, talk etc as long as Musa was looking at it. The moment he turned his glances away, that person would instantly collapse and be injured. Therefore, Musa had to be with that person all the time, with the result that he could not spare time for meditation, etc. He prayed to the Lord to withdraw the boon."

Question: "Sir, what are the consequences of a seeker taking liberties?"

Master: "When a seeker takes liberties with his beloved, he loses the spirit of devotion for the beloved (satguru). He will not be able to learn from the satguru. Hence it has been said that one who takes liberties with one's preceptor is a seeker of a very low grade."

Question: "Sir, why does the spirit of devotion for the preceptor decline in such cases?"

Master: "Taking liberties implies assumption of equality of status with the satguru. How can devotion be sustained in such a case?"

A devotee: "Yes sir. It is true that in such a case a seeker conceives himself as an equal of his satguru."

Master: "A seeker should not expect any progress in such a case. He must conceive his satguru as God. When he places before himself a very high ideal and realises his satguru as of the supreme status, he can, then, raise himself to the correspondingly high state."

Question: "Sir, when does a seeker commit the error of taking liberties or assuming informality?"

Master: “There are many reasons for that. First, it is lack of faith. The seeker then entertains doubts. He suspects that the instructions and guidance given by the preceptor are not correct. He is not certain whether he would benefit by these instructions. He feels that there are some others who are superior to his satguru and considers the utterances of his satguru to be at variance with those of the others. Second, when the subtle ego arises in him he considers himself to be an entity or a power. He feels that he, too, has sufficiently traversed the spiritual path or risen to a height. Then follows a decline in his respect for his preceptor and he starts taking liberties with him. Third, for certain reasons, he forgets his relationship, or the mood, that he is a servant and the preceptor is the master. Then the seeker starts making undesirable demands. Knowing that the seeker is not yet fit for these demands, the preceptor evades his requests. He knows very well what is in the best interest of the disciple. He has infinite intelligence, whereas the disciple has finite or limited intelligence. When there is a decline in the devotion and respect for the satguru, the seeker errs into the realm of liberties.”

Question: “Sir, how should a seeker guard against these pitfalls so that he makes no error of taking liberties nor is there a decline in his faith and devotion?”

Master: “A seeker can safeguard against these dangers only if fear is associated with faith and devotion. If the love for his satguru is accompanied with fear, the seeker is always alert and deeply concerned about the maintenance of his relationship with his satguru. He is extremely careful so that his satguru is not displeased with him, even in the slightest measure. But in case he takes liberties, there is the possibility of the satguru being displeased with him. It is also likely that the satguru might then ignore the disciple. The Lord is benign and merciful, at the same time he is very independent and stern (*beparvah*). To a lover (seeker), the displeasure of the beloved (satguru) is worse than death.”

A devotee: “Sir, notwithstanding what you say, we have heard episodes of many a saint where his beloved took undue liberties with him.”

Master: “Progress on the spiritual path is possible either when a seeker is in deep love with his murshid or when the murshid is in love with the seeker. You are referring to a situation where the satguru is in love with the seeker, that is, the satguru is the lover and the seeker the beloved. But such instances are very rare. To take liberties with the murshid is the path of vanity. One can't say whether vanity would be acceptable to the Lord. God is supremely

independent (*bepervah*), and maybe he refuses to accept vanity. But humility is ever acceptable to Him. Humility is a supreme virtue, and there are no words to fully praise humility. Humility is the safe method.

“A seeker must avoid the path of vanity or of taking liberties with the Lord. Eventually, it results in a great harm. Humility is the right path and it leads to great attainments.”

The Master then said *Hari Om* to the group and that marked the end of the satsang that day.

MEETING 18

ON INFORMATION

ADIPUR, KANDLA (GUJARAT) *19 December, 1954*

The Master has come to Adipur to spend some time with his eldest son Dr Hari. Some devotees from Bombay, Baroda, Ajmer, Delhi, etc have also come to stay with him. We are a group of about 25 persons, besides the family of Dr Hari. It is a very big house, with a large courtyard. There is a beautiful garden maintained with great care and interest by Dr Hari. In the garden there are cages for birds and a log cabin for pigeons. There are plants of flowers and fruits and foliage.

It is winter. The Master strolls in the garden in the mornings. A little later, he sits in the sun meeting the patients and also talking on spiritual matters with others. There is a continual spiritual discourse throughout the day. Satsang is arranged in the morning and in the evening. Many people come to attend it. There are some people who sit quietly and meditate in a corner. It is a fair of divine love.

This morning as the Master was strolling in the garden, he overheard a loud discussion in a room. He could identify the persons engaged in discussion. With a smile, he asked me to go there and find out what the debate was about. I went into the room and found two of my friends engaged in a discussion. One of them was holding in his hand a book entitled *The Serpent Power*¹. I came back and reported to the Master what I had seen. He said to me, "Please call them here. Let me also hear them". I went back and conveyed to them the wish of the Master. With an expression of bashfulness, they came and sat before the Master.

¹ The Serpent Power by Sir John Woodroffe

Master: "Please entertain us also with your ideas. What is the point of the debate. Let everybody here share your ideas."

One of them felt shy and did not utter a word. The other devotee who was somewhat free with the Master, spoke.

Devotee: "Sir, we were reading this book. There are references in it to the

Kundalini Shakti and the various *chakras* (centres). While reading, we got involved in discussion. He (*pointing to his fellow devotee*) says that while progressing on this path, one first sees light (*jyoti*), but I have heard that one first hears the primordial sound (*anhad shabd*). I have also read this in some books.”

Second Devotee: “Sir, he might be right in what he says. But according to what I have read, one sees light first.”

Master: “Both of you are correct. But what is the relevance of such information at the initial stages? The seeker’s duty is to stand firm by the instructions of his preceptor and continue his march. He will come to know everything in due course. You might have read in Sri Yoga Vasishtha that when Sri Ramchandra put certain questions to Sri Vasishthaji at the initial stage, Sri Vasishthaji told him that he would answer those questions later. When Sri Vasishtha finished his exposition on gyan, he asked Sri Ramchandra to ask him the questions he had put at the initial stage. Sri Ramchandra politely replied, ‘Sir, it is no longer necessary to put those questions. I have realised answers to all the questions from within. I am now free from all doubts.’ Likewise, a jiva acquires all information automatically in due course. One has to maintain firm faith in the words of satguru and continue one’s march. About those jivas who, instead of being on the march, engage themselves in reading books and in wasting their time in gathering information, the fakirs have said:

He who is engaged in the battle of words
Fails to ascend the heights of love.”

Question: “Sir, does it imply that it is not at all desirable to gather information?”

Master: “That is not exactly so. It is essential for a seeker to have some information at the initial stages. He must know that there are vast stores of invaluable treasures within his body, and that he has to dig and discover them. He has to be in the company of knowledgeable people and learn from them. Then he must engage himself in the task of digging (discovery). If he cannot discover everything, let him discover some at least. In case he fails to do that, his assuming a human body is wasteful. Today or tomorrow his body will be carried by the pall-bearers to the cremation ground. To begin with, he must make enquiries with the saints. Enquiries are admissible up to this stage.

But once firm understanding is acquired, then one has to be fully absorbed in the precept of the satguru so that the Self is realised. After the precept has been obtained from the satguru, it is not right to strive for gathering information. That is a wasteful pursuit.”

Question: “Sir, if one gets acquainted with the experiences and strivings of those who have preceded one on the spiritual path, would that information not be useful?”

Master: “The study of scriptures is useful up to a limit only; one need not be crazy about it and spend one’s time entirely in that pursuit. The books and scriptures are the product of experience. They did not precede experience, rather these were the experiences of others who wrote the books. There is nothing like one’s own experience or personal realisation. One’s salvation comes out of one’s own personal realisation and not by the realisations of others. Fakirs have said:

Read, enquire and realise the Self,
Scripture is the realisation of someone else.

“One’s hunger is not satisfied when food is being cooked in the house of someone else. What does one attain by reading books and gathering information? One is born not to be a bookish scholar. One is born to realise the Self. Self-realisation does not come from reading books or gathering information. It comes only with practice and by being absorbed in the satguru’s precept. The one word uttered by the satguru is the essence of all the scriptures. All the scriptures are contained in *gurushabd*. If that is realised, the scriptures, too, are supposed to have been realised.”

A devotee: “Sir, you say rightly. Shah Sahib has condemned excessive study and excessive information. He says:

They read and read,
But do not bake the mind,
The more they turn the pages,
Farther they go from the Self.

And

Your austerities are a trifle,
Compared to the vision of the Lord.

What for are you wandering around?
You may turn numerous pages,
But in essence it is the one word.

And

Understand the primordial word,
Forgetting all the books,
Illumine yourself within,
How many books will you read?"

Master: "Fakirs are little concerned with information. People seeking information are under the influence of the intellect. They are calculating all the time. They are in the realm of mortality. The jiva has to realise the state of immortality and, therefore, must go beyond reasoning. He must be firm in the practice of the precept of the satguru and be fully absorbed with stability in that single word. He will thus realise everything out of that. He must adhere to what the satguru has given him. This alone will lead to the realisation."

Question: "Sir, it is likely that one may get confused in the course of one's striving, and might, therefore stop proceeding ahead. Isn't it good to inform one in advance what is likely to be experienced on the way?"

Master: "What you say is based on reasoning. Why should a satguru tell a disciple in advance what is going to happen? A seeker must be free from impressions. What he ought to do is to report his experiences to the satguru, and the satguru will then guide him accordingly. The duty of the seeker is to march and not to allow his mind to wander around. In case the seeker is obedient, the satguru will certainly put him on the right path. When a seeker is informed in advance, he gets engaged in hopes and expectations, instead of being absorbed in the practice. If he happens to experience what he had been told in advance, he will presume that he has made some progress. This will result in complacency and his further progress will stop. And if he fails to get those experiences, he would then be subject to anxiety and tension with the result that he might doubt the precept and the satguru. Here, too, the progress stops. In both the cases, the information proves to be harmful. Such are the consequences of expectation. Spiritualism is the path of non-expectation."

A devotee: "Sir, experiences or visions are helpful to a seeker within certain limits because they enhance his inspiration."

Master: “Experiences or visions are of two types: divine and devilish.”

Question: “Sir, what are the divine and the devilish experiences?”

Master: “The divine path leads to the Lord and the devilish path leads away from the Lord. Certain powers are bestowed upon a seeker in the course of his practice. For example, he might earn the power to grant wishes. What he utters comes to be true. Then he will be engaged in granting the wishes of the people. He will earn publicity and forget the Lord. He will be happy with the world. This is the devilish path.

“What are these powers? These are occult powers. Fakirs avoid occult powers because these bind a seeker to the world. The divine path leads to the Lord. This is the path of suffering or dishonour. Suffering is dear to fakirs because it leads to the Beloved.”

Question: “Sir, what is the meaning of the devilish path?”

Master: “Who is the devil? Ego is the devil that always tries to misguide a seeker. It is always chasing the seeker, and follows him for a long distance. It changes its form in so many ways that the seeker gets puzzled. But those who are guided by the wise and have learnt from the satguru the secret of discriminating between the divine and the devilish, can distinguish between the two. Many fail to progress for lack of this training.

“A seeker must abandon information and function like the innocent. Then only he can cross the different stages; otherwise, he will get stuck.”

A devotee: “Sir, Sai Qutab Ali Shah has said:

If you know,
Yet you must not know,
It is the path of innocence;
Only they are permitted entry,
Who do not assume the self,
Only the innocent win the Beloved.”

Master: “Yes, excessive learning and excessive information are harmful on this path. In the olden days, satgurus used to instruct their disciples to unlearn what they had previously learnt.”

Question: “Sir, knowledge and learning are essential for a jiva. What is a jiva worth if he is without learning?”

Master: “There is nothing wrong with learning or knowledge. But knowledge that creates obstacles on the spiritual path is worthless. It is of no

value.

“I am reminded of an experience in Quetta. There I met a sadhu who was learned and scholarly. Once he fell ill and I had to visit him as a physician. After giving him medicine, I asked him, ‘Sir, you have been to many places and have been in the company of many. Have you practised spiritual discipline?’ He said, ‘No, I have found it difficult because so far I have not sought initiation under a guru. I tried very much, but my learning has always stood in my way. I have met many holy persons, but I always found fault with everybody. I have read about the qualities of a guru. It is only when I am relieved of my information or learning that I shall be able to seek a guru. I am sick of my learning.’ The sadhu wished to seek a guru and to realise the Truth, but his learning was an obstacle before him. He remained deprived because of this reason.”

A devotee: “Sir, learned men and scholars can win many people and earn huge publicity.”

Master: “How is a fakir concerned with publicity? The learned and the conceited can win the common folk but not the specialists. The duty of a jiva is to win the Supreme Being and not to earn publicity. Why should a jiva be concerned with publicity?”

Thereafter the Master remained quiet for some time. Then he went inside the house.

MEETING 19

ON BLESSINGS

(Ashirvad, Dua)

TRAIN 12 December, 1954

Today, the Master, in the company of seven devotees, left for Adipur (Kandla, Kutch) by train to spend some time there with his eldest son, Dr Hari. A number of devotees had come to Bombay Central Station to see him off. The railway compartment was not crowded and we had very comfortable accommodation. We occupied two cabins. The Master was given a bed to lie on a berth. After about two hours, a young couple with a child got into our compartment at some station. They took seats in the cabin adjoining ours. Very soon, the child started crying bitterly. This awoke the Master. The child continued to cry and it would not stop. The Master asked a lady devotee to find out what was wrong with the child. She came back and reported that the child had just been given bottle milk. Though it was not hungry, it would not stop crying. For the past two months the child had developed the trouble; it would start crying soon after taking milk. As a result of intense and prolonged crying it had developed symptoms of hernia and was now being taken to Baroda for an operation. The Master was alarmed to hear this. He said, “May God save the child! Just see its tender age, and think of the risk of an operation! Please go and tell the lady that I am a doctor and would like to see the child. In case she has difficulty in bringing the child here, I can go myself to see it there.” The lady devotee conveyed the message to the couple. They instantly came with the child. The Master took the child in his arms. As he pressed its abdomen, it cried very hard. After smelling the breath of the child, the Master handed it back to its mother and said, “I see nothing wrong with the child. There is no illness. The bottle milk does not suit it. It causes pain in the stomach and makes it cry. It is due to continual crying that it is suffering from hernia. Once it stops crying, hernia would disappear automatically. The evidence for it is that the child has a foul smell in its mouth. It indicates that the food is not digested. You should give up the idea of an operation. Change its food and give it very light milk, goat milk etc and

I hope that the child would be all right. In the meantime, I am giving you medicine. Give him a few globules now. That will give it relief.” The mother took back the child to her cabin and gave it the globules. Within a few minutes, the child stopped crying and it went to sleep. The couple was happy to see the quick change. They thanked the Master and promised to change the child’s diet. After some time the train reached Baroda station. The couple got down there.

Master: “Look, how the times have changed. It has become a fashion with mothers not to breast-feed their babies but to put them on baby-food. Owing to this attitude of mothers, children are exposed to grave risks. Just see the tender age of this child and imagine the consequences of an operation. One cannot say whether it would survive the operation. Mothers avoid breast-feeding their babies. How will a child develop love for its mother, if it does not take the mother’s milk? To a child, how would its mother be different from the rest of the family? Anybody can give it a bottle of milk. Why then should a child be attracted towards its mother? It is the law of nature that a child’s love for its mother grows as it takes her milk. When a child sucks the mother’s breast, its gaze is fixed on the mother’s eyes. The mother’s vibrations enter the child through her eyes. If the mother is on the spiritual path, the child also comes under that influence. But if a child is deprived of the mother’s milk and is fed on bottle milk, it will not receive the vibrations of its mother.”

A devotee: “Sir, these days, ayahs are engaged to look after children. They see their mothers’ face for a short while in a day. What will be the future of such children?”

Master: “Children brought up by ayahs or maid servants are influenced by their thinking. Those brought up by servants of low mental level or inferior attitudes are influenced by their ways. How can such children be expected to be under the influence of their mothers? That is why children have little respect and love for their parents. They hardly bow down to their parents or touch their feet. When they bow down to their parents, they receive their blessings. When would children receive blessings from their parents if they do not bow to them? These days, children do not understand the value of blessings. They do not know how blessings help in life. The fault lies with parents, especially the mother. The mother is responsible for the upbringing of the child. A child is influenced mainly by its mother.”

Question: “Sir, are blessings of such importance in life? By and large, people

these days are unaware of the importance of blessings.”

Master: “These days people are in search of money. How can they know such things? They have not been in the company where they could develop this kind of understanding and insight. They do not attend satsang. They do not spend time with saints and sages. Where would they learn the importance and powers of blessings and the way blessings help in building up life?

“When a child bows down to its parents and elders, it receives their blessings. There might come a moment when the blessings are accepted by the Lord and the child may receive immense benefits. Blessings are a great thing. Many people are not aware of the power of blessings. I had learnt from my teachers, during my childhood, about the powers of parents’ blessings.

“In 1890, I passed out of the primary school and entered Grade I in a secondary school. The Headmaster of the school was a man of austerities and he was spiritually inclined. He led a very simple life. Formerly, he used to teach only the higher grades. But in the year I joined the school, he started taking some periods of Grade I also. One day, he asked me to meet him at his residence where he wanted to have a personal talk with me. I went to his house in the evening. He was sitting on a cot. I took a seat opposite to him on the floor. He asked me to do certain things. First, he asked me to use an extremely simple dress like him. Second, he asked me not to see the *tazia* processions. Those were Muharram days and in our town *tazia* processions used to be taken out for many days. I requested him to excuse me for seeing the processions as I was so greatly charmed by the *shehnai* music played in those processions that tears would profusely flow down my cheeks giving me immense pleasure within. He then allowed me to see the Processions. Third, he told me that the first thing I ought to do on rising early in the morning was to touch the feet of my mother and apply the dust of her feet on my forehead. He asked me to make that a firm habit and not to miss it at all. I asked him, ‘What would be the advantages of that?’ He said that by her blessings I would do my lessons well, get a good rank in the class, shall have good relations with my friends and shall always be saved from his anger. He promised that he would not raise his hand at me in anger. In case I found him raising his hand at me in anger, I should then shake my head violently and he would be reminded of his promise and would then withdraw his hand. I used to follow his instructions faithfully. Once I had to leave my home very early while my mother was still sleeping. I touched the leg of her bed and went to school. That day I was picked by the headmaster to recite a poem. I made

some mistakes and saw the headmaster raising his hand at me. To remind him of his promise, I shook my head. Seeing this, he immediately withdrew his hand and asked me why I could not correctly recite the poem. I told him that my mother was still sleeping when I left for school in the morning and, therefore, instead of touching her feet, I had touched the leg of her bed. Thus I was convinced that the blessings of the mother and the dust of her feet are highly potent, because when I had touched her feet I did the lessons well in the class. By the grace of God, I had such like teachers during my childhood to guide me on the right path.”

Question: “Sir, is humility before parents so important and beneficial? These days, people are shy of touching the feet of their parents. It is considered to be an orthodox and old-fashioned custom.”

A visitor (*a devotee of another saint*): “Sir, you know about our life. We used to be poor. Now we have houses and wealth. It is due to the blessings of my mother. She was bed-ridden towards the end of her life. My wife and I looked after her with all sincerity. She was so happy that she used to bless us all the day. All our attainments are due to her blessings.”

Master: “Blessings have a wonderful power. Service (*seva*) brings immense benefits, and one earns blessings. Blessings help in material and spiritual progress. Nothing has helped me more in my life than blessings. By the grace of God, I have received blessings in abundance—blessings of my elders, friends, neighbours, saints, and the satguru. I have been blessed by everybody. I am grateful to God for all these favours.”

A devotee: “Sir, it is a common practice with us that at the time of examinations, parents ask their children to visit saints to receive their blessings.”

Another devotee: “Sir, how can one pass an examination without studying? I find it difficult to understand how one can pass an examination by bowing before a saint?”

Master: “What you say is guided by reasoning and, therefore, you find it difficult to understand. A fakir is competent to do anything. I shall tell you about myself. During my childhood, I used to spend a lot of time with Sai Vasanram Sahib¹. He was the satguru of my elder brother. He loved me very much. I used to spend several nights together at his place. So, I did not have much time for studies. I used to look at my lessons on my way from home to school. But examinations are hard tasks. During the examination days, I would go to Sai Vasanram Sahib and place my difficulties before him.

Initially, he used to give me a talisman written by his satguru. I would wear it and pass the examination. Later on, he taught me a *mantra* to be recited before the examinations. I used to practise it and instantly I would know what I had to write in my examination. Thus, I used to pass my examinations.

1 a well-known saint in Rohri (Sind)

“When I was a student at the Medical College, Hyderabad, I had a friend who knew astrology very well. Looking at my horoscope, he made three predictions. The first two predictions turned out to be correct. According to the third prediction, I was not to pass my examination at the Medical College. This caused me great anxiety. I decided to seek a saint and to pray to him for protection. Luckily that year I had the great fortune of meeting the Revered Master, and he graciously accepted me as his disciple. In those days it was the custom for doctors to carry walking-sticks in their hands. When a medical student started carrying a walking stick, it indicated that he had passed his examination and was a regular doctor. In the presence of the Revered Master, the prediction by my friend used to come to my mind, but I did not have the courage to talk about it. One day, as I was sitting in his presence and this thought arose in my mind, the Revered Master said to me, ‘There are snakes on the hill. From today onwards, you must carry a walking-stick with you.’ I could instantly understand the purport. Coming out, I told my cousin that we must carry walking-sticks in our hands. My cousin said, ‘How could that be possible? We have not yet passed the final examination. Everybody would mock at us.’ I remained quiet but was feeling uneasy as I had not obeyed the instructions of the Revered Master. Next time the Revered Master said, ‘I had asked you earlier and am asking you again to carry walking-sticks with you.’ We obeyed his command and started carrying walking-sticks with us. Thereafter I was certain about passing the examination, and I did pass. Destiny was shaped by the blessings of the Revered Master. What is it that a fakir cannot do? He can do everything.”

A devotee: “Sir, our friend is puzzled at a simple thing like passing an examination. Fakirs can do great wonders—things that are unbelievable. Am I correct, sir?”

Master: “Yes, what is it that a fakir cannot do? He is competent to do anything. I shall quote another instance about the Revered Master.

“Once an old couple who had lost their only son and were severely grief-stricken, were looking for a saint who would bless them with a son. Wandering about, they came into the presence of the Revered Master. The Revered Master used to be constantly in meditation (*samadhi*). When the couple came, they found him in meditation. As the lady placed her head on his feet, tears from her eyes fell on his feet. With the eyes still closed and the head resting on the wooden-rest¹, the Revered Master asked, ‘What is the matter?’ The lady replied, ‘Sir, bless us with a son. God had given us one but He took him back.’ Placing his hand on her back, the Revered Master said, ‘You will get a son.’ The lady said, ‘Sir, kindly open your eyes and look at us. We are old.’ Without lifting his head, the Revered Master said, ‘Your request has been accepted in the Dargah of Allah Sai. You will certainly get a son.’ And they got a son. Some years later, I went with my associates to the village where the old couple lived. We saw the boy. They treated us with great hospitality. The blessings of a saint can transform the hopeless into the hopeful. There are many instances like that.”

¹ a wooden angle used for resting the head during meditation

Question: “Sir, I am told that in the town of Rohri there were saints to whom the people took the patients and they got healed. Is that correct?”

Master: “Yes, I shall quote my instance. When I was about eight years old, I had typhoid fever. The fever would not go in spite of the various medicines taken. Eventually, my mother stopped giving me medicine; she covered me with a blanket and took me to Sai Vasanram Sahib. It was noon and the saint was taking lunch. After paying due obeisance to him, my mother related to him my illness. The saint made me sit on his lap. He was eating a loaf of *jawar* with *dal* (a preparation of pulses). He would take a morsel of loaf, dip it in *dal*, ask me to have a bite out of it and then eat the morsel himself. This way he finished the entire dish. Instead of water he took a glass of a local cold drink (*shardai*). He would ask me to have a sip and then have a sip himself. After finishing the drink, he handed me to my mother. It was a hot summer noon with the scorching sun outside. He asked my mother to make me walk up to my home. He gave strict instructions that in case I refused to walk owing to fever and weakness, I should in no case be carried in the lap or on the shoulders. I must walk home myself under all circumstances. My

mother promised to follow the instructions literally. She asked me to hold her finger and walk with her. On the way, I wept and cried very much. But my mother would not listen to my wails. She was firm in her faith and made me walk all the way. Reaching home, I immediately went to sleep. When I woke up in the evening, I had no fever. That was due to the grace of the saint. How else would you explain my eating that food and walking in typhoid fever, and my complete recovery the same day?

“One day my eldest son, Hari, when he was very young, was taken critically ill and there was no visible sign of his survival. We were extremely anxious and did not know what to do. I went to Fakir Mehar Ali. When I reached there, the fakir was playing a game of dice with a boy. After paying due obeisance, I took a seat by his side and anxiously waited for him to finish the game so that I could put the request to him. But he would not stop the game and repeatedly asked the boy to continue playing. I signalled to the boy to finish the game so that I could talk to the fakir. But the fakir said to the boy, ‘Continue the game, the medicine is doing its work.’ The game continued. I became more anxious and again signalled to the boy to stop. But the fakir again said to the boy, ‘Continue with the game. The medicine has finished its job. The boy is all right now.’ Overtly, the fakir gave me no opportunity to make a request to him. But inwardly, he did everything and helped us. When I returned home, I was surprised to see the boy playing outside. I had left him in a very critical condition. Who did all this? Was it not due to the concealed grace of the fakir?

“Years ago I was appointed Medical Officer in Aden. I had two hospitals for contagious diseases—plague and smallpox—to look after. There was risk to life in working in both the hospitals. My elder brother sent letters pressing me to resign my job and return home immediately. I sent one of these letters to the Revered Master. He wrote back, ‘The fakir is with you. Continue to serve there with full vigour. No harm will come to you.’ I felt much assured and engaged myself in the work with zeal and vigour. I would sit by the side of the Arab patients stricken with plague and smallpox and render them all manner of service. I would clip their nails, cut their hair and do other things which hardly anybody would do for patients of ordinary diseases, let alone patients of deadly diseases like smallpox and plague. Nothing happened to me. This was due to the blessings of the Revered Master.

“There is another instance when I was exposed to a grave risk to my life. Years ago I had gone on a pilgrimage to Badri Nath and Kedar Nath with a

group of about 40 associates. Before leaving, I had shown my horoscope to an astrologer and he told me that on the way there would occur either an accident or a theft. An accident took place. My son Hari had his thumb badly crushed in the door shutter of a railway compartment. By the grace of God, a major calamity was reduced to a minor accident. There was no theft. But instead I developed eczema. It started on the face and then spread to the entire body. I tried many doctors, but there was no relief; there was continuous aggravation instead. The trouble increased so much that I lost faith in medicines and came to Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad to earn the grace of the saints. The itch had become so intense that I had no rest at all, day or night. I could not sit at rest at a place even for five minutes. There was no question of getting sleep. I would walk all the while and keep scratching all over the body. Blood would ooze out of the skin. I became sick of my body. When I talked about it to my friends, they advised me to go inside the Tomb and pray to the Revered Master for relief. I said that it was not right to trouble the Revered Master for the sake of the body. If at all a request had to be made, it ought to be for spiritual progress, though that, too, should be avoided because he is omniscient. I would not make a request. The disease continued to increase unabated. I could neither take food nor get rest. One evening, I became unconscious owing to weakness. One of my associates rushed to Sai Hadi Baksh. Sai Pir Shah was also sitting there at that time. Sai Hadi Baksh requested Sai Pir Shah to help me. Sai Pir Shah said to him, 'It is not a great thing. You, too, can do that. I shall get *teerth dhara*¹ here.' He called for a glass of water, drew two lines on the ground and recited something silently. He gave the glass of water to Sai Hadi Baksh who brought it to me and asked me to drink the water. Then Sai Pir Shah went away. I got some relief, but about 25 per cent only. Thereafter, Sai Hadi Baksh Sahib sent someone to Fakir Mehmood Shah who lived a few miles away from there, to request for a talisman for me. When the messenger reached there, the fakir was sitting with his back to the entrance door. Without having looked at the messenger, he shouted, 'Why does not Hadi Baksh treat himself. He, too, is competent. Why should he bother me? All right, Hadi Baksh is our friend and Doctor Sahib, too, is our friend. Here is the talisman. Take it with you.' As I put on the talisman, the pain disappeared. That night I had a good sleep after many restless days. Within two days the disease entirely disappeared, leaving no scars on the body, as if I had never been afflicted with the disease. This happened because of the blessings and grace of the fakirs. What is it that a

fakir cannot do?”

1 holy water

Question: “Sir, do you still have the talisman with you?”

Master: “No, once I had gone for a bath at a hot spring and had taken it off alongwith my clothes. When I put on my clothes, the talisman was missing. For this reason, I do get eczema occasionally, but in a mild form.”

A devotee: “Sir, we have been told that the Revered Master was very kind to you. Out of love, he used to call you as ‘My child’. Because he loved you very much, the Revered Master came to your house in Rohri in his advanced age. He must have blessed you immensely.”

The Master remained quiet for a while. Then he spoke in a soft and solemn tone.

Master: “I had his grace at every moment of my life. I cannot move even a step without his grace. I am a non-entity. Right from the beginning he has been conducting me with his grace.”

Again he became quiet for a while and then continued.

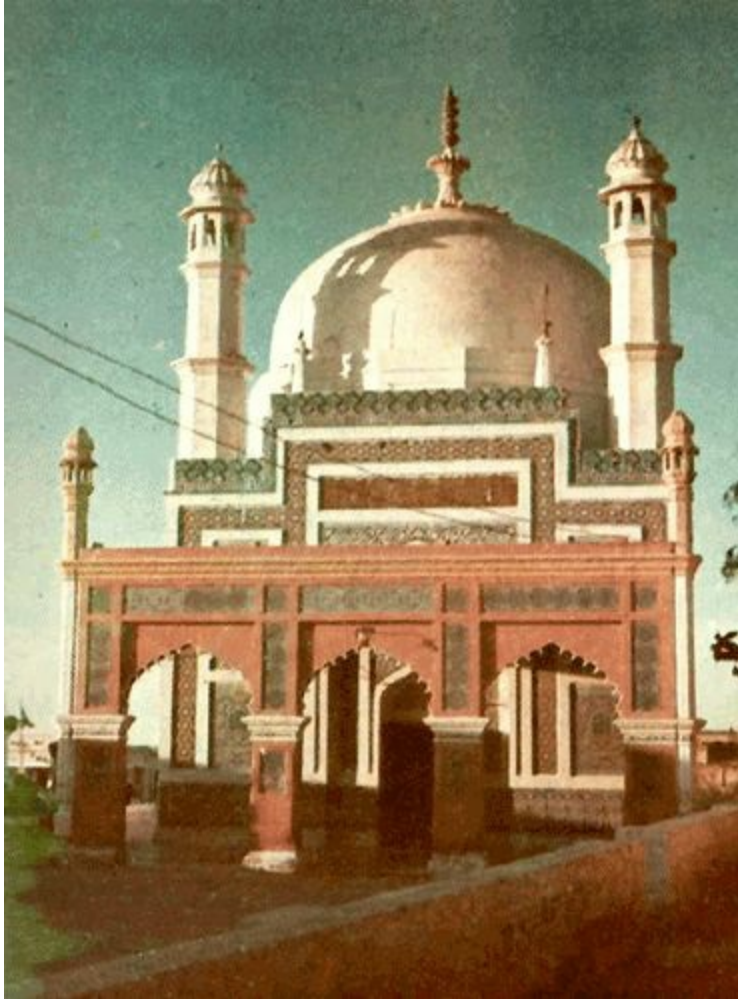
Master: “You mentioned about his visit to Rohri. It is correct that I had requested him to visit my house at Rohri, at the instance of my eldest brother. The Revered Master readily agreed to my request. At that time his age was about 100 years. He was weak, yet he would remain in meditation (*samadhi*) all the twenty-four hours in a day. Though he had agreed to my request, the members of his family and others did not approve of it. They asked me not to take him to such a long distance at that advanced age. I accepted their suggestion. But when the Revered Master came to know of it, he said, ‘Do not say anything to my child. I shall certainly go to him.’ Preparations for the journey were made and it was planned that he and the group would leave by the night train. Horse carriages were arranged for taking them to the railway station. But he was in meditation all the time with no idea whether it was day or night. The group could leave Dargah Sahib only if he rose out of meditation. For two nights, the carriages had to be sent back. On the third day, he said, ‘My child would be eagerly expecting us at Rohri. When it is time to leave at night, please shake me and I shall get up.’ He left that night and arrived at Rohri the next morning. He stayed there for three days and three nights. Many persons came to see him. My brothers and all others in the

family served them with full devotion. He was very pleased with us. At the time of his departure, all of us gathered before him. Looking at me he said, 'The fakir has come to your house. Ask what you want.' Out of respect, I said nothing and remained quiet. He repeated, 'Fakir has come to you. Ask what you want.' Again I remained quiet. And again he said, 'Fakir is asking you for the third and last time. Ask as you please.' I fell at his feet and said, 'Sir, kindly bless me with spiritualism.' 'May it be so' he said, 'that is what one should ask for.' Then he went in and met the ladies. Addressing my wife, he said, 'Fakir has entered your house. Ask what you want.' My wife said, 'Sir, I have learnt that my husband does not have a long life. Kindly bless him with a long life and add to it the remaining years of my life, too.' He laughed and said, 'My child has indeed a long life. Since you have asked, we shall enhance it. Now ask for anything more.' Intervening, some ladies said, 'Sir, she does not have a child. Kindly bless her with a son.' 'May it be so,' he said, 'I shall come to my child.'

"Time passed. One day, while I was taking midday meal and my wife was moving the fan, I said to her, 'Women desire to have children. Don't you have the desire?' She replied, 'I, too, desire very much. But I must get either Sri Ramchandra or Sri Krishna, or Guru Nanak or the Revered Master.' I said, 'The first three are divine incarnations and to desire their rebirth is asking for too much. They descend on earth under the Divine Will at special times to save the humanity. As regards the Revered Master, he is still alive. How could you think of that?' She remained quiet. By the time I finished my meal, there was a knock at the door. I opened the door. There was a postman holding a telegram. It was about the passing away of the Revered Master. I said to my wife, 'Look what has happened. Your request has been granted by the Lord.' That night, while I was in a train on the way to Hyderabad, the Revered Master appeared in a vision and he said, 'I shall come to you as a child.' After a year, I had a son (Hari). By his grace, others in the neighbourhood who did not have children also got children.

"I was certain that the Revered Master had reincarnated himself as a child in my house. When I talked about it to my associates, they would not believe me. When the child was four years old, I received a letter saying that when I went to Hyderabad next, the child should also be brought and they would like to see him personally. The death anniversary of the Revered Master was approaching soon. I went there with the child. Those days, I did not engage a horse carriage for going from the railway station to Dargah Sahib but went on

foot. This time, too, I went there on foot. One of my associates carried the boy on his shoulders and he walked ahead of us. As he was going, the boy directed him where to take a turn. As we approached Dargah Sahib, the boy said, 'That is our house'. Everybody was surprised to hear this. We went into Dargah Sahib to pay homage. Those days, the tomb was not there in its present form. All graves were alike. The child entered first and we followed him. After we came out, he said, 'Father, you ought to have placed four annas where you placed two and should have placed two annas where you placed four.' On being asked what he meant, he said, 'You ought to have placed four annas at the grave of the Revered Master.' Then we went to Sai Roshan Ali Shah, the spiritual successor to the Revered Master. He received the boy with great love and made him sit on his lap. Later, during that visit, one of my associates asked the boy if he could raise his breath (do pranayama). The boy said, 'Yes, certainly.' They both raised their breath, but the boy brought it down first. When my associate asked the boy why he brought it down before he did, he replied, 'I am still a small boy. Yet I could raise my breath.' Ordinarily, a child of his age is not supposed to know these things. Thereafter, my associates felt reassured and they agreed to what I used to think of the boy."



Dargah Sahib Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah,
Tando Jahaniyan, Hyderabad (Sind)

A devotee: “Sir, you must be extremely fortunate in that your satguru has taken rebirth in your house. If a saint who has realised the Truth, reincarnates himself on the earth to fulfil a wish of his disciple, it is a fine example of the grace of the satguru upon the disciple. We must hail you and your satguru. Rarely can there be a seeker like you. That is wonderful, immensely wonderful!”

Another devotee: “Sir, it has been the primeval order (*adi neeti*) that the Lord is bound by the love of the devotee. He takes birth with those who have infinite love for Him. You, too, had infinite love for your satguru. We hail you.”

Master (*in a solemn tone*): “That is his grace I am a non-entity.”

Tears came into his eyes. He could not utter words any more. We, too,

became silent. Though I had more to enquire about blessings and grace, I preferred to wait for another occasion.

MEETING 20

FEAR AND DEVOTION

(Bhaya aur Bhava)

SHANTI NAGAR 18 July, 1954

After the reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha was over in the satsang today, a person asked a question.

Question: “Sir, the other day when a singer sang

God is supreme,
Never bid defiance to Him,

you had, while talking on the subject of ‘Taking Liberties’, mentioned that devotion must be accompanied with fear, or else one is likely to get a setback. But sir, fear is not a desirable thing. It makes a man coward and timid. Man is divine; he is an aspect of God. Could you kindly clarify this and remove my doubts?”

Master: “Yes, man is divine, an aspect of God; but when? It is only when he annihilates the self and realises the Self, or when he loses *khudi* and realises *Khudai*. He has to lose his individual identity. Only then can he attain Divinity, not otherwise. A jiva assumes himself to be an entity with a name and a form. He considers himself something—so and so, a grandfather, a person in power etc.

“In reality, you are the Self, the Absolute, or God, only if you realise that, not until then. This realisation is attained not by talking, but by practice and endeavour. Here, I shall quote an instance. It was winter. A dervish was sitting in his room, with a few devotees. He was warming himself by the side of a fire-pot (*angithi*). Suddenly, a stranger entered his room shouting *Ana-al-Haq* (I am God) with the tune of a monosting. Paying obeisance to the dervish, the stranger took a seat and started warming himself by the fire-pot. He continued to repeat *Ana-al-Haq* with a rhythm. The dervish asked the stranger who he was. The stranger repeated *Ana-al-Haq* (I am God, the Absolute). The fire in the pot had subsided but the ash was still hot. The

dervish whispered something in the ear of a devotee who lifted the fire-pot and overturned it upon the visitor. The visitor jumped up shouting, ‘Why are you burning me?’ The dervish said, ‘Who is getting burnt?’ The visitor retorted, ‘I am getting burnt. Who else are you thinking of?’ The dervish said, ‘You are *Haq* (The Absolute). How can *Haq* receive burns? What are you talking about?’ The stranger fell at the feet of the dervish, sought his apology and promised that in future he would not make such a claim. The dervish then said to him, ‘Divinity is not a matter of slogans or rhetoric. It is a path of endeavour, striving and realisation and of extinction of the self. Even on attaining it, one is not supposed to utter a word or to make a disclosure of one’s attainment.’ The visitor asked the dervish for pardon and promised not to repeat the mistake.

“As long as a jiva bears a frame of five elements, he must maintain the attitude of submissiveness and humility, no matter what his spiritual attainment is. In the past, if someone called a fakir as Allah, the fakir would check him from doing that.

“You asked about fear. The fear that is eulogised on the spiritual path is not the fear of animals or fear of being killed by something; it is fear saturated with love and devotion, fear that the Beloved may not be displeased even in the slightest manner. A fakir is always concerned about the pleasure of the Beloved and his bond with Him; he is always afraid of His displeasure.

“Once a seeker asked a fakir, ‘Sir, you have endeavoured very hard throughout your life and you have had a very simple life. Could you kindly say if you have been accepted by the Lord?’ The fakir asked him to come after six months for the answer. After six months, it was time for the fakir to leave this world. He called the seeker, and reminding him of his question said to him, ‘The fakir had been accepted then and he is accepted even now.’ The seeker said, ‘Sir, if you had been accepted even then, why did you not give me the answer at that time?’ The fakir said, ‘There were six more months to go. The Lord is very independent (*bepervah*). I was afraid lest I should err during that period and incur His displeasure.’”

A devotee: “Sir, it is said that someone saw Shah Abdul Latif weeping. He was surprised and asked Shah Sahib:

Every sufferer weeps,
But having attained Him,
Why should you now weep?

Shah Sahib replied:

I have attained Him though,
Yet I beseech Him, kindly
Be never displeased with me.”

Question: “Sir, the examples cited by you suggest that one should fear at the later stages when one is approaching one’s goal and not before that. Am I correct, sir?”

Master: “No, it is not so. A seeker must maintain fear and devotion right from the beginning. If he fails to do so, he would not be able to adhere to the precept of the satguru. These two prerequisites are essential at all the stages on the spiritual path, from the beginning to the end. If a jiva has practised these from the early stage, these become habits or the natural disposition with him and are of immense help to him subsequently. Fear and devotion amount to penitence and yearning. One must constantly practise penitence, and there lies the salvation of the jiva. Shah Sahib has said:

With the force of penitence
They swim across stormy oceans.

This fear—the penitence—is the lifebelt that helps a jiva to cross the ocean of the universe.”

Question: “Sir, you say that fear and devotion, or penitence and yearning are essential at all the stages. In what manner are love and fear essential at all the stages?”

Master: “A seeker possessing devotion or faith is contented and grateful in all the states of life. He is happy in that his bond with the Lord has been maintained so far, and he prays for safe relationship in the future also. He is cautious not to err or slip which might result in the displeasure of the beloved or in the breaking of the bond in the future.

“A seeker on the path of action (karma marg) takes care not to be disrespectful. Karma marg is the path of discipline and reverence. Lack of reverence is not appreciated on this path.

“A seeker on the path of devotion (bhakti marg) is cautious not to make the mistake of giving vent to his sufferings, or of blaming the Lord, or of criticising Him, lest he should be displeased and the bond is broken. At a still

higher stage when the gaze of the seeker is fixed on the two eyes of the beloved, he (the seeker) is then very careful in that his gaze is not distracted from there, that is, it is not distracted from Atma to *anatma*, lest it might result in the displeasure of the beloved and so in his separation from the beloved.”

A devotee: “Sir, some days ago I was reading the life history of Hazrat Khawaja Maiuddin Chisti Sahib of Ajmer. He says that when the Lord wants to attract somebody, He bestows love upon him, and by virtue of that he becomes a lover and desires to attract God towards himself so that he is united with Him. Once he attracts the Lord, his eyes are then fixed upon Him and he cannot look at anything else, nor he ought to see anything else. In that book there are references to two other dervishes.”

Master: “Please tell us about them also.”

The devotee: “There lived a dervish whose eyes were fixed on the beloved. Once his eyes tended to look at something else, and he was immediately reprimanded from within for what he was doing. A voice from within said, ‘You forgot Me at this moment?’ The dervish was very much frightened lest the beloved should turn away. He regretted very much and prayed, ‘O Lord, if my eyes have erred, please take them back.’ His prayer was granted and he turned blind, and remained blind till the end of his life.

“It is said of another dervish that he blind-folded his eyes for forty-five years, lest his eyes should see anything other than the beloved.”

Master: “On the path of love (bhakti marg), the eyes must not see anything except the beloved. In case of a failure, one might incur the displeasure of the beloved.

“On the path of knowledge (gyan marg), the seeker approaches the state of ‘Oneness’. In case he is dragged towards duality, owing to arousal of a desire or under the influence of a desire, that is a great setback to him. The higher the stage on the spiritual path, the more intense is the state of subtlety and so the more slippery are the steps. A slip means a severe fall. As a seeker ascends higher, so does the fear of falling down increase. He is extremely careful not to forget ‘Oneness’ and guards against duality. He does not want to forget that.

“It is for these reasons that fakirs practise penitence up to the end of the path. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Fear while you endeavour,

The judge is expert and strict.

“It is not that one must have either fear or devotion (endeavour); the two have to be maintained simultaneously. God is gracious and benign, and at the same time He is strict and independent. Everybody knows about the benignity of the Lord, but hardly does anybody think of his independence and sternness.

“O! jiva, why should God need your devotion (bhakti) charged with ego? Devotion bereft of fear is not acceptable to Him. Always take care not to incur His displeasure and see that what has been bestowed upon you is not withdrawn from you. Fakirs are always afraid of Him. I shall tell you an instance of Fakir Mehboob Shah of Rohri. Once as he was sitting in his room with his devotees, a Hindu saint on horseback passed in front of his dwelling. Fakir Sahib said to his devotees, ‘Please see what a divine personality is passing before our house.’ The devotees peeped out and saw that a person of Masand family¹ dressed in royal robes and mounted on a horse which was decorated with golden bridle, was going in a long procession. The devotees asked Fakir Sahib, ‘Sir, what is this? Saintliness with pomp and show? Saintliness means simplicity, as it is in your case. How can a person with pomp and show be a saint?’ Fakir Sahib said to his devotees, ‘Please go to Masand Sahib and convey my regards to him. Then ask him which, according to him, is the sweetest letter in the Gurumukhi alphabet.’ The devotees went to Masand Sahib and conveyed to him the message of their murshid. Masand Sahib said, ‘No other letter is as sweet as *bha*.’ The devotees brought the reply to Fakir Sahib, but could not understand the purport and, therefore, asked him to explain what it implied. Fakir Sahib told them that the saint had said by implication that he always maintained *bhaya* and *bhava* for the *bhagwat*, that is to say, he always maintained fear and devotion for the Lord.

¹ Masands are followers of Guru Nanak.

“Only he who is content with the will of the Lord and always bears fear and devotion to the Lord, is a true seeker. Devotion must be accompanied by fear, or else a seeker is likely to make mistakes. Penitence must accompany yearning so that one’s bond with the beloved remains everlasting.”

Question: “Sir, why is God independent or unconcerned (*bepervah*)? It is

said that God is the ocean of mercy, etc. Why then this kind of unconcern or sternness (*bepervahi*)? What is the reason for it?”

Master: “God is supremely benign. He is very kind, but we must not disregard His independence and unconcern (*bepervahi*). That is His greatness; these are His attributes. If these attributes were not with Him, the seekers would never be under check; they would be inflated with ego. There is a hidden grace in these attributes of the Lord. God is infinite intelligence, and man has finite or limited intelligence. How can finite intelligence comprehend infinite intelligence? There is love and mercy underneath His independence and unconcern. He does that for the good of the seeker. Won’t you call that His love?”

Question: “Do these conditions pertain only to the spiritual path, or are they applicable to mundane life as well?”

Master: “They apply to all. Yesterday, someone from a (refugee) camp came here. He was saying, ‘What good has God done us? Nothing at all. He took away our hearth and home in Sind, and displaced us from our native land.’ There would be others, too, like him who would be complaining against God. We have finite intellect. We cannot conceive that He has done that out of love for us. He helped us to learn a lot in this life, and settled our accounts in this life itself, for which we might have, otherwise, taken more births. It is difficult to accept this, and yet it is true. Won’t you then say that there is love behind these attributes of the Lord?”

Question: “Sir, if love is concealed within His sternness and the sternness is for the growth and welfare of seekers, why are saints so afraid of God?”

Master: “These are the problems of the transitional or the intermediary stage. The saints are afraid of a slip back and of the consequential damage. If one has a fall, one has to repeat one’s efforts for progress and advancement. This implies delay in the attainment of the goal—the realisation of the beloved, the Self. Lovers are always impatient in love and they want meeting with the beloved immediately, without delay. Therefore they are always cautious and afraid of the independence and sternness of the Lord.

“Once a fakir riding a horse was passing through a bazar. Urchins collected around him. Making fun of him, they asked him, ‘Sir, how many legs does your horse have?’ The fakir said, ‘Let me please get down and count.’ The fakir got down, counted the legs, and said that the horse had four legs. Giving a hearty laugh at it, the urchins said, ‘Fakir Sahib, you ride the horse every day and yet you do not know how many legs your horse has.’ The fakir said,

‘I know that the horse has four legs. But the Lord is very independent and, therefore, before telling you, I wanted to check if the number of legs had changed.’”

At this, a college student sitting in the gathering put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, how can that be so? Things happen as they are determined by the laws of nature. How can there be a variation. The laws of nature are fixed.”

Before the Master could give an answer, a devotee said in reply.

A devotee: “Sir, I have seen in Bombay a cow with five legs. Its owner takes it around and begs alms by showing it to the people. We know of Siamese twins who have their bodies joined together. According to the rules of nature, the two bodies should be separate.”

Another devotee: “Sir, the laws of nature are fixed, and yet God can do what pleases Him. Once a disciple put this sort of question to Sri Ramakrishna. In reply, Sri Ramakrishna said that the Lord could do anything and that if He had the power to make, the power to unmake and alter, too, rests with Him. But the disciple would not accept that and argued that a plant producing red flowers invariably produced red ones and never white ones; for it is His law. Sri Ramakrishna said, if God wills, He can produce a white flower in a plant bearing red ones. But the disciple did not accept the proposition. Next day, early in the morning the disciple saw to his utter surprise that on a branch of a china rose plant there were two roses, one red and the other brilliantly white, without the tiniest red spot on it¹.”

1 cf. Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master, published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, page 493

Master: “Yes, what is it that the Lord cannot do? He is supreme and independent. Fakirs value and respect His independence. They are always cautious and afraid. They always pray to Him that their bond with Him may remain unbroken. A seeker must have fear while practising devotion (bhakti). Devotion is praiseworthy, and fear is commendable but the best disposition is the unity of the two.”

Then the Master said *Hari Om* to all. The hymn to the Absolute was recited in a chorus. That marked the end of the satsang that day.

MEETING 21

LOVE (*Ishq*) 1

What is Love?

SHANTI NAGAR 7 August, 1954

Today is Janmashtmi, the birthday of Lord Krishna. Yesterday I received a message from the Master to attend Janmashtami celebrations at Shanti Nagar. Earlier there was no practice of celebrating Janmashtami here. It is being celebrated for the first time.

I reached here very early in the morning. There was a large portrait of Lord Krishna, about 5 feet by 3 feet, placed on a table in the hall. It was bedecked with flowers. Incense was burning before it. After paying obeisance to the Master, we did obeisance to Lord Krishna. The picture was painted on glass. It was the famous pose of the Lord—and of deep significance—having three bends over the body: on the legs, on the waist and on the neck; the flute in the two hands touching the lips, as if He was playing the flute. It is said that saints, fakirs and lovers adore this pose. It is of mystic and divine significance.

The devotees had sprayed scents and rose water on the picture, and the air in the hall was pleasingly and refreshingly fragrant. The atmosphere was pleasant and serene. Everyone was looking at the picture. The Master addressed the group.

Master (*pointing to someone in the group*): “He got it prepared quietly and brought it here yesterday. He said that since Lord Krishna is a noted incarnation in India, the portrait should be ceremonially installed here today the Janmashtami day. Hence, all have been invited. What do you think of that?”

The group: “That is an excellent idea, sir.”

Master: “It seems that it is the Divine Will that the group receives the blessings of Lord Krishna.”

The devotees were pouring into the hall. The Master exchanged greetings with them and asked about their wellbeing etc. I moved near to the man who had brought the picture and asked him how he happened to conceive of that

idea. He said, “I do not know much. About six weeks back an idea arose in my mind that since the Master is love personified, love must be granted status at his place. As my mind was engaged with these thoughts, the idea came like a flash that since Lord Krishna is the supreme incarnation of love, His beautiful portrait should be installed here to make it known that love stays here physically and spiritually and that this is His supreme abode. I know nothing beyond that. I acted under the force of my impulse.” I was amazed to hear this and complimented him on his thoughts and on what he had done.

By now the hall filled with devotees. A new-comer accompanying a devotee, entered the hall. Introducing him to the Master, the devotee said that his friend was a Parsee (Zoroastrian) industrialist. He was very interested in spiritual matters and was also associated with Ramakrishna Math (Temple) in Bombay. He was fond of poetry, specially English poetry. He also composed poems. The Master greeted him with warmth and offered him a seat by his side.

The programme started at 9:00 a.m. with an invocation to Lord Krishna. Thereafter a *bhajan* (devotional song) in Hindi by Mira Bai was sung. It said:

I am mad in love,
No one knows my agony.
My seat is on the gallows,
How shall I rest?
The Beloved's place is in heaven,
How shall I meet Him?
A sufferer alone understands a sufferer,
Only if one were afflicted.
A wise alone understands a wise,
Only if one had the wisdom.
I wander with agony,
And get none to heal me.
Agony of Mira shall disappear,
When Krishna is the healer.

Following the same theme, a devotional song in Sindhi by Sai Dalpatrai was taken up. It said:

Seeing you, I am in ecstasy,

I am enchanted by Your beauty,
Your separation is painful,
I am agonised in body and mind,
Your love has burnt me in its fire,
As a moth is burnt in a flame.

Intercepting the singer, the Master asked the Parsee guest if he could follow the song. He said that he could follow the Mira *bhajan* that was in Hindi, but could not follow the latter song that was in Sindhi. The Master asked someone in the group to translate the lyric to the guest. The remaining stanzas of the lyric were sung. Then one of the singers put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, what is that love about which Mira said that she was mad in and Sai Dalpatrai said that he was burning in love as a moth does in a flame?”

Master: “It is divine love, it is *ishq*, that unites a jiva with Allah. Only a very fortunate one has it in one’s luck. It is earned with very hard and intense striving. It is not possible to describe it. There are many attributes of love. Only a few among these can be mentioned. Only those who have enjoyed it know what it is. It cannot be put into words. (*looking at an elderly person*) Is it correct?”

Elderly person: “Yes, sir, I shall recite a couplet on love:

Love is love,
Silence is its beginning.
Love is love,
Silence is its end.

“Sir, silence is the beginning and the end of love. How can it be described?”

Master: “Yes, that is right. Can God be described? One can see His attributes, but words fail to describe what He is. The same is the case with love. The two are identical.”

Question: “Sir, we don’t follow it. If poets and saints have written and said so much in praise of love, it must be something. Could you kindly elucidate further?”

Master (*addressing the same elderly person*): “If you remember a poem or a

lyric on this subject, kindly recite that.”

Elderly person: “Sir, I am reminded of a *doha* (couplet) by Kabir Sahib. He says:

*Prem Hari ka roop hai,
Hari prem ka roop,
Ik doi ho bhase,
Jivan suraj aur dhoop.*
(Love is an aspect of God,
God is an aspect of love,
The One is perceived as two,
As are sun and sunshine.)

“Sir, if I have your permission, I may recite a lyric by Bedil Sahib.”

Master: “The lyrics of Bedil Sahib are excellent, but his language is very difficult. Please explain the stanzas in simple language, as you recite. If one fails to get the purport of the lyric and enjoys only the tune or the rhythm, that is merely a physical enjoyment or an attraction or a pleasure of the senses (ears), and it is not of much significance. A seeker has to go beyond the pleasure of the senses. He has to get himself absorbed in the meaning or the purport of what is said.”

The elderly gentleman then recited the lyric of Bedil Sahib in Sindhi and explained its meaning. The lyric said:

If someone asks you
What is love?
Tell him, O Bedil,
This is the answer by love:
I am infinite and formless,
Unborn, immutable and Absolute,
I am peace, peerless and pure,
Free from all reasoning.
I manifest myself
In infinite forms,
Yet my true form is
Oneness without duality.
Suns arise like atoms from Me,

Infinite mirrors for my manifestations,
But I am the only light
In all the reflections.
The illusion of duality
Does not stay before me,
I am the One,
Am attained with concentration.
I manifest Myself variously
In forms and men,
Calm and creation are alike to Me,
I am One beyond change.
As Musa I called,
Reveal Thyself,
I replied myself,
You cannot stand my glamour.
With My will
I came with form from Formless,
I am the One, O! Bedil,¹
None exists but Me.

¹ name of the poet

Master (*addressing the Parsee gentleman*): “Could you follow that?”

Parsee gentleman: “Sir, I could understand the explanation. It is about love, and love has been identified with God. Some English poets have also written like that. If I have your permission, I shall quote them.”

Master: “Very good. Please do.”

Parsee gentleman: “Sir, one English poet has said:

Love is the root of creation, God’s essence.

Another English poet has said:

Love is our highest word,
And the synonym of God.

Coleridge says:

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
Are all but ministers of love,
And feed his sacred flame.”

Master: “That is very good. We must compliment the English poets on their insight. (*addressing the singer who had put the question on love*) So, you have got answers from various sources. Could you follow them? It has been said that God is Truth, Love and Beauty (Allah is *Haq*, *Ishq* and *Husn*). According to Vedanta, it is called *Sat Chit Ananda*, that is, Existence, Knowledge, Bliss. We have noted so many attributes. But since we have been discussing love (*ishq*), it should suffice for us to say:

God is love and love is God.”

Question: “Sir, it implies that love is where God is. It is said that God is omnipresent. Can we then say that love, too, is omnipresent?”

Master: “That is right. Just as God permeates everything, so does love permeate everything.”

A singer: “There is one lyric on this subject. If I have the permission, I shall sing that.”

Master: “Please do.”

The singer: “Sir, a saint has said:

Love tells this, O friends,
I permeate everything.
Heavens and netherworlds exist in Me,
The One has assumed glamour,
I am manifest, I am latent,
So, who is born, who is dead?

Another saint has said:

See the wonder of love,
The Beloved permeates all,
Just for manifestation,

The One assumes forms,
The Beloved comes into multiplicity.

Fakir Sachal Sarmast has said:

Out of love He comes as man,
As wayfarer to wander.
In the guise of man He comes,
As a guest for a while.
You are truly the lord,
There is no place for subordination.”

Master: “Yes, that is right. Love is the essence of the universe. The entire universe is bound with love. The birth of man is the result of love. Love permeates the entire creation. Love permeates everything—human beings, birds and beasts. Nothing subsists in the absence of love.

“Love exists in everybody. But because man has diffused and distributed it in all directions, he cannot perceive that. He can realise it when he focuses it only in one direction.”

Question: “Sir, what is the centre for love in man?”

Master: “What is the centre for God in man? Just as He permeates everywhere, so does love. The two are identical. Love exists in the human body in the form of Primordial Power (*Brahm agni*). That Primordial Power is love—the Divine Love—that is latent in man but is dormant. When that becomes potent, it may be said that love has woken. Love does not dawn from anywhere outside; it is within, but is dormant. One has to wake it. The progress of a jiva depends upon its waking or its being manifested.”

Question: “Sir, when and how does love wake or manifest itself?”

Master: “Love manifests itself when a jiva annihilates his self, not otherwise. Very hard endeavour is needed for the annihilation of the self; one has to struggle very hard. Love exists as a spark in everybody. One has to fan it or use bellows so that the spark may grow into a big blaze. Then one should be able to hold the divine fire (*Brahm agni*) within, one should be able to contain the unrest and the upsurge. But if a jiva happens to be lucky and the mystic divine wind blows at him, then the spark grows into a big blaze quickly.”

Question: “Sir, I find it difficult to understand the purport of using fans or

bellows and the blowing of mystic winds. Certainly, it does not mean using ordinary fans, bellows etc. Could you kindly make it clear?"

Master: "You are correct. This does not mean using ordinary fans, bellows, etc. These are the fans or bellows of the breath (pranayama) that help in the growth of the divine fire (*Brahm agni*). The dormant love becomes potent. Love exists as a spark in everything, and it grows into a blaze with the help of breath control (pranayama). *Brahm agni* also grows by other means such as maturity of bhakti or of gyan. There is yet another method, and that is if a jiva is lucky he may earn the grace of a saint. In that event the blaze is so powerful that it is difficult to describe it; it is beyond comparison. (*addressing the singers*) Please sing some songs in the praise of love."

The singers sang three songs.

I

The prescription of love,
Does not come to everybody,
Love is ever killing,
Whom he considers loving and dear.
Love makes immortal,
Whom he loves and desires.
Love is brave as a lion,
By nature is a commander.
It accepts no chains,
It remains lord supreme.
Love is the name for courage,
None can tell its price.
Ask the lovers,
The unrest it brings.
Love is the boat in the ocean of breath,
That reaches across without the boatman,
Quickly it crosses the current,
Reaches across in an instant.
Love is ecstasy special,
Helpless is the lover,
With no care for the body,
He accepts the cross with fervour.

II

Love is a divine gift,
Bestowed on the fortunate,
Not earned by days labour,
Nor by wailing through the night,
Nor by reading scriptures
In the morning light.
Love is a saintly gift,
Beg it from the lovers,
Love dawns upon him
Who earns favours of lovers,
None realises the Truth
Without the grace of fakir.

III

Ask, O friends, what you want,
Comfortable beds and cradles to rock,
Silken clothes, gardens and mansions,
Men at your service, beck and call.
Ajiz¹ says, I need nothing but love.
Ask, O friends, what you want,
People to be at your doors,
Powers to grant wealth and favours,
To guide desolate weak and sick,
To distribute nectar and grant wishes,
People to acknowledge your supremacy.
Ajiz says, I need nothing but love.
Ask, O friends, what you want,
Powers to unite separated friends,
To heal the sick and the wounded,
To remove sorrows and grant comforts,
To bring pleasure to grief stricken,
To grant luxury and comforts.
But I shall not accept all these,
Ajiz says, I need nothing but love.

Ask, O friends, what you want,
People to attend without asking,
Nice food for birds and beasts,
Delicacies for fish, ants and insects,
Powers to grant comforts to all in world.
I shall not accept a bit out of these,
Ajiz says, I need nothing but love.
Ask, O friends, what you want,
Luxury house to each in the world,
Deserts converted to green lands,
Dust removed from the surface of earth,
Flowers to blossom all time on earth,
Rich fruits to all men on earth.
Yet I accept none among these,
Ajiz says, I need nothing but love.
Ask, O friends, what you want,
All men paying homage to you,
Stores full of rubies and diamonds,
All wealth and gold for your use,
Gaiety and festivities swinging around you.
Yet, I accept none among these,
Ajiz says, I need nothing but love.
Ask, O friends, what you want.
If you ask me to accept,
A humble request I shall make,
Give them wealth and comforts who desire,
Give others all that God has created.
Ajiz says, give me only love of beloved.
Ask, O friends, what you desire,
Ask anything but the anguish,
I grant everything except love.
If you want head as price for anguish,
Or peel off the skin of my body,
Sell me or burn me alive,
But in return accept my bargain,
That will be your favour,
Ajiz will be indebted for ever.

1 name of the poet

The clock struck twelve and there came the call for lunch. It marked the end of the morning session.

MEETING 22

LOVE 2

Stages of Love

SHANTI NAGAR 7 August, 1954

Some of the devotees went out to the compound to take lunch. Others remained in the hall. Devotional music continued. Many devotional songs addressed to Lord Krishna were sung.

The Master returned to the hall at about 2:30 p.m. after a brief rest. At that time a lyric composed by Sai Hadi Baksh, whose pen-name is *Miskeen* (Humble), was being sung. It said:

By the music of His flute,
He has captured my heart,
With locks of hair aflutter,
Sweet divine words,
Moving lips with graceful smiles,
He has captured my heart.
With a diadem on His head,
And flute on His lips,
And sweet tunes played,
He has captured my heart.
With glittering rings in ears,
That spell magic all over,
His figure constantly in my mind,
The yogi has captured my heart.
Casting spell on Miskeen's mind,
You have made him captive,
Cutting him with a blunt knife,
Made him unfit for mundane life.

One more lyric by Sai Hadi Baksh was taken up. It said:

You robbed me of my heart,
Then remained distant,
This behaviour is
Not right for You.
First You gave me love,
And then You withdrew,
This behaviour means
Great suffering.
To give love at times,
To turn face away at times,
This behaviour
Is not right for You.
You are beautiful beloved,
Then You adorn Your face,
You kill with love,
Yet be not near,
Neither send a message,
Nor write a letter,
This behaviour is
Not right for You.
You establish love,
Then You avoid,
At times be with me,
At times be away from me,
At times You sob for me,
At times You don't call me,
This behaviour is
Not right for You.
You meet Miskeen,
You do not smile at him,
You sit with him,
You avoid him,
And with gift of anguish,
You make him weep all time,
This behaviour is
Not right for You.

As the song ended, someone in the group put a question.

Question: “Sir, what is indicated in these songs?”

Master: “What else can be described by fakirs except love? Love also manifests the whims and fancies (*naz*) of the beloved. These may, as well, pertain to love at the gross state, which has been eulogised as *ishq majazi* (physical love, *saguna prem*).”

Question: “Sir, in what manner is *ishq majazi* appreciated by fakirs and what kind of pleasure do they derive from it?”

Master: (*addressing the singer*): “Do you remember a song which describes the views of fakirs?”

Singer: “Yes, sir, It says:

You rob my heart by your glance,
When you see with captivating eyes.
When you make up your eyes,
They are inebriated,
Proud and penetrating,
Killing and bewitching.
Bright red lips with a mole above,
Like a black spot over a flame,
Or like a sapphire on a red gem,
Bear an enchanting smile.
Glamour of your forehead is superb,
Sandalwood garland on Your chest,
Ornamental bells around ankles,
Your necklaces captivate the great in numbers.
Sufi cannot describe Your form,
It is like a flame behind a glass,
He says You are Truth and manifestation,
And also that You are
Nearer than the nail of my finger.”

Question: “Sir, this is a very good song. But won’t you kindly explain more about love in a simple manner?”

Master: “There is only one love but it has two sides or aspects: *majazi* (physical, *saguni*) and *haqiqi* (love of the formless, *nirguni*). *Ishq majazi* is love at the physical or gross level—it may be love for a form or an attribute.

Ishq haqiqi is love of the Formless that is divested of forms and attributes. It is love nevertheless in both the states. To the wise, *ishq majazi* is a ladder for the realisation of the Truth, it leads to God realisation and Oneness.”

Question: “Sir, how does *ishq majazi* help a seeker and lead him to the state of God realisation?”

Master: “*Ishq majazi* helps in the fixation or stability of the thought. Once the thought is fixed, forgetfulness of the self starts. It is easy to fix the thought on a form or an attribute. In addition, *ishq majazi* promotes humility, sacrifice, loss of identity, wakefulness, disinterest in personal physical charm and in comforts. These attributes please the satguru and help in the realisation of the Self.”

Question: “Sir, is concentration on the form of the satguru *ishq majazi* (physical love) or *ishq haqiqi* (spiritual love)?”

Master: “The form of the satguru is apparently of gross nature but latently subtlety pervades it. The seeker is directed to concentrate on the form of the satguru because that easily leads him to the attainment of subtlety. It is called *ishq haqiqi*.”

Question: “Sir, what are the austerities or restrictions prescribed on the path of *ishq majazi*?”

Master: “We cannot think of improvement or progress in the absence of restrictions or austerities. One has to observe purity and also refrain from taking liberties. Speech has to be restrained, and humility has to be practised. One must constantly remain within the discipline of the preceptor.”

Question: “Sir, is *ishq majazi* obligatory for all seekers?”

Master: “Not necessarily. If a seeker had traversed the path of *ishq majazi* in his previous birth, he might not be directed by his satguru to practise it in his present birth. Such seekers are directly recommended the path of *ishq haqiqi*. The path of *ishq majazi* is very difficult and slippery. A seeker has to be alert every moment.

Ishq majazi is a slippery path,
There is no place for the small minded,
Where the eyes are fixed, says Sultan Bahu,
There is no place for arguments.

“Fakirs say that a seeker can stay in *ishq majazi* only when he accepts risks to life and loss of reputation. A seeker enjoys love only under these conditions.

Ishq majazi is a powerful attractive force. At this stage, if a seeker is not afraid of the beloved, there is a danger of slipping down. Further, if a seeker does not conceive the beloved as God, he would be committing a sin and would not reach the acme. Unity of the heart is essential in *ishq majazi*. A seeker is not concerned with the body. He has to maintain purity of the heart. Purity and austerity constitute the first stage on the divine path. The beloved dwells only in a pure heart.”

A devotee: “Sir, obstacles and opposition on the path of *ishq majazi* cause despair and desperation to a jiva, don’t they?”

Master: “Pleasure arises only under these conditions. Bliss arises only when there are opposition and suffering. Do you consider love an easy task? It requires a lion’s heart. It has been said:

If you do not have a lion’s heart,
Set not your foot on the path of love.

Fakirs say that he who does not have a lion’s heart need not enter into the path of love.”

Question: “Sir, who have excelled in *ishq majazi* and *ishq haqiqi*?”

Master: “I have liked the *ishq haqiqi* of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and the *ishq majazi* of Laila Majnu. Lovers like Majnu have been rare.”

Question: “Sir, what special qualities did Majnu have?”

Master: “Once a cameleer from Laila’s town came to Majnu’s for some work. As he was returning to his place, he met Majnu on the way. Majnu asked him where he was going. He replied, ‘I am going to Laila’s town. Anything I can do for you?’ Majnu asked him, ‘Will you carry my message to Laila?’ The cameleer said, ‘Yes, certainly.’ Majnu asked him again, ‘Will you carry my message to Laila?’ He repeated this sentence again and again and ran along with the camel. All the way he kept saying, ‘Will you carry my message to Laila?’, running alongside the camel. When it was nightfall, the cameleer said to Majnu, ‘We have arrived at Laila’s town. You can now go to her and convey your message yourself. You have been running all the day and know nothing.’ When Majnu saw that it was dark, he went to a mosque and asked the mullah if he could give him shelter for the night. The mullah showed him a room where he could stay. There was a cot in the room. Majnu was unable to decide how to sleep there. He would not put his feet in the direction of where Laila lived and he did not know where she lived. Besides,

he thought that as he had come to his beloved's land he must not sleep. He feared that if he lay down on the cot, he would naturally fall asleep owing to the fatigue of the day. He, therefore, resolved to hang himself from the ceiling with his feet up and his head down. He pulled out a rope of the cot and hung himself in that manner.

“The cameleer narrated to his friends his encounter with Majnu who loved Laila of their town, and how Majnu ran alongside the camel shouting all the way, ‘Will you carry my message to Laila?’ A maid servant of Laila, who had come to the market to buy milk, overheard the gossip. When this news was conveyed to Laila, she got extremely alarmed. Fearing lest anything should happen to Majnu, she called a wiseman of the town to consult him on what should be done to save Majnu from any possible danger. The wise man suggested that Majnu should be asked to keep his feet up and head down so that the flow of blood was directed towards the head and also he should be served loaves soaked in butter oil. Laila instantly sent her maidservant to Majnu with a pot containing loaves soaked in butter oil. She (Laila) did not carry it herself, because she did not want to be exposed. Lovers always seek privacy and secrecy. She was very restless and prayed to God for the safety of Majnu. When the maidservant came to Majnu, she found him hanging from the ceiling, with his feet up. She served him the meals sent by Laila. On her return, she conveyed to Laila what she had seen. Laila thanked God for putting the right ideas in Majnu's mind about hanging himself with his feet up. She sent food for Majnu the next day also. On the third day, when the maid servant carrying the meals for Majnu entered the mosque, the mullah asked her to leave the pot with him and told her that he would serve the meals to Majnu. The maid servant obeyed him. On the subsequent days, she would leave the pot with the mullah. After a week, Laila thought about checking if Majnu had improved in health and had sufficient blood in his body. Instead of sending a pot containing meals, she sent an empty pot with a knife in it and told the maid servant to ask Majnu to send back the pot with his blood. As usual, the maid met the mullah at the entrance of the mosque. She handed the pot to him. When the mullah uncovered the pot, he was frightened to see its contents. He told her that he was the butter-eater Majnu, while the blood-giver Majnu was inside the room. He confessed that he had been eating the food sent for Majnu. The maid then went inside the room and conveyed to Majnu what Laila had asked for. Majnu said, ‘I am willing to sacrifice my entire self for Laila. This is a small thing Laila has asked for.’ Piercing the

knife into his flesh, he gave her whatever blood came out. These are the ways of the lovers.”

The Master then asked the singers to sing some songs. Some of the songs sung were:

I saw Truth in Beauty,
And God in Love,
I saw the Self
In my own flight.
What the mullahs get
In prayers and fasts,
I find that every moment
In submissiveness and humility,
Mehmood saw the Beloved
In his slave Iyaz,
King Raidayaj sacrificed his head
In love of music.
Mansoor found the secret
In the words *Ana-al-Haq*,
Yusuf found his love
In long hair of the beloved.
Fakir Sarmad discovered that
In the charm of the eyes,
Sunan crossed the ocean
In the boat of sacred thread.
Love is God,
It is a divine secret,
Ajiz¹ is absorbed
In the divine mercy.

And

Forget the self and see the sight,
All in the image of the Beloved.
Watch every breath of yours,
Remember the Lord in every breath,
That is the direction of love

That leads to Immortality.
Fix mind on divine glamour,
Image of the beloved within,
Forget your own body,
All is transitory.
Forget the self in love,
Ignore body altogether,
Then give the slogan,
I am the Truth.
Death does not touch him,
Who is absorbed in Beloved,
I swear in the name of God,
Have faith in my word.
My preceptor has instructed,
And showed the path of Truth,
Yusuf¹ says:
I sacrifice myself for You.

¹ name of the poet.

The clock struck 4. The Master said that it was time for tea and that the evening satsang would commence at 4:30 p.m.

MEETING 23

LOVE 3

How to Attain Love

SHANTI NAGAR 7 August, 1954

All the devotees came back to the hall after the tea break. As the clock struck 4:30, the Master addressed the gathering.

Master: "Shall we start the satsang?"

Group: "Yes, sir."

Master: "Shall we have music or a discussion?"

A devotee: "Sir, we have many questions to ask. We shall prefer a discussion."

Master: "Please put your questions."

A devotee: "Sir, how is love obtained?"

Master: "How is love obtained? That is a very good question indeed. One has to pay a price for every deal. That applies here as well. But what is the price in this case? A seeker has to fulfil certain requirements intently and faithfully to the satisfaction of the beloved. Only then he gets love."

A devotee: "Sir, what are the requirements?"

Master: "The first requirement is *company*. O jiva, if you are seeking love, then seek those gatherings or assemblies of people where the fire of love is ablaze. Register yourself with them. Spend time there so that you get the heat of the fire. Company is of great importance. One acquires a colour according to one's company.

"The second requirement is *intense agony*. You should be longing or yearning at every moment. Light the fire of anguish within. When the flames arise, tears will flow down your eyes. Some lovers get blood in place of tears as a result of the intense yearning and heat within. You should get at least water in your eyes. Strive, yearn, call, cry, seek, request. Shed some tears. The benign may then show mercy to you."

Question: "Sir, you say that one must spend time in the company of lovers and then he will learn to yearn and weep. Could you kindly tell more explicitly?"

Master: “You will agree that when one sits by the side of the fire, if one does not get burns, one certainly gets warmth. When one goes to the seaside, though one may not bathe there yet one may get a splash and have his clothes wet. So is the case with company. If one remains in the company of lovers who weep and wail in love, one is likely to be influenced by them. When a seeker continually keeps company with lovers and when some benign person shows mercy to him and attracts his thoughts, he will be drawn to the realm of agony and incessant tears. This can happen only if on entering the company of lovers, a seeker maintains a desire to attain the state of intense agony and weeping. He must simultaneously keep alive his yearning for the beloved. Then he might be granted agony and weeping.

“Agony is not an ordinary attribute. It is a divine gift or a boon. It is not a marketable commodity. It is a genuine attribute. It is the real thing and is attained with certain endeavours.

“O jiva, you must learn to weep so that your disposition of the gross attains to subtlety. Subtlety is attained when the mind is gentle. You must learn to yearn for the Lord. When you surrender yourself to the Lord, He takes full care of you.

“O jiva, your eyes are full of impurities. The whole day you look at unwanted matter. You see many faces and forms. Wash them out with your tears at night. When your eyes are cleansed of that dirt, the beloved takes seat in your pupils.

“O jiva, shed tears; sooner or later, love will manifest itself within you.

“You may attend to your mundane affairs during the day. But keep awake at night and shed tears. Do you know what pleases the Lord? It is tears. You cannot win the beloved over unless you shed tears. How will you arouse His pity if you do not shed tears for Him. Abandon sleep, keep awake and shed tears.

“Who loses sleep? Jivas of four categories lose sleep. First, it is the mother. She is alert lest her baby is pressed or hurt when she turns during sleep. Second, it is the deer. It is afraid of being attacked during sleep. Third, it is a thief who works at night. And fourth, it is a fakir upon whom God has bestowed love. His inner eye is always directed towards the Lord and fixed on Him. Apparently he might appear to be sleeping but he meditates even in his sleep.”

Question: “Sir, how can one weep in absence of love? Agony is aroused after love. But you say that one must weep to attain love.”

Master: “The rule is that agony or weeping must precede love, and not vice versa. Agony or weeping does not necessarily arise due to love. People attend mournings and funerals. They weep when they see others weeping. How does that happen? Love is not involved there. It is the result of company. A jiva must seek the company where he develops agony or the attitude to weep. Love will arise out of it.

“Remember that the progress of a jiva is unthinkable if he does not weep. If he does not weep in his present birth, he must have done so in his previous birth, or, he might have to do that in his coming births. Progress is not possible in the absence of agony or weeping.

“O jiva, you must maintain *secrecy* when you weep. Agony and weeping that is made public is not accepted. Love means secrecy or privacy, or else it is ineffective. Lovers value night. They have privacy at night. No one can observe them. Secrecy is an essential prerequisite on the divine path. Publicity or ostentation is highly damaging. Love must be free from publicity or show. If you publicise your love to the common folk, they will mock at you, and your emotions and upsurge will be dampened or lost. Also, you might be subject to others’ envy, and that might bring you harm. Therefore, withdraw yourself and weep in a quiet corner. Seclusion is a gift to a seeker. This is the path of experiences (*anubhava*) and not of publicity. Can a woman speak of the pleasures she has with her husband? Not at all.

“There were two girl friends. They loved each other and confided everything to each other. They promised that after marriage they would not conceal anything from each other. In due course, one of them got married. When the other girl asked her to narrate the experiences of the married life, she refused. She only replied, ‘Get married and see for yourself.’ The other girl got annoyed that her friend was not keeping the promise. After some time, the other girl too, got married. When her friend asked her to narrate her experiences, she said, ‘You were correct. No girl can narrate to others the experiences of her married life (*suhaag*).’

“What is the tradition of love? It is privacy or secrecy. One does not have to make it known to others. One has to weep in solitude and forget oneself. Love acquires greater depths when it is maintained in secrecy. Then it grows into a big blaze. For example, if a pot containing food is covered, it is not polluted by dogs, cats, etc, but if it is kept exposed, the food becomes unserviceable. If love is exposed, it is not effective and lasting.”

A devotee: “Sir, Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Silence is golden,
Exposure is harmful,
The bond of the beloved,
Fades away from you.

And

Love is great,
Greater is secrecy,
More ignorant the people,
Nearer is the beloved.”

Master: “Yes, Shah Sahib has also said that the more intense the feeling of love is, the more strictly should it be guarded in secrecy. The beloved is realised only in secrecy. It has been said in Guru Granth Sahib:

Jin Har paya tin chhupaya.

(He who has realised God has concealed that.)

We have discussed three requirements for attaining love: *company*, *agony* and *secrecy*. The next requirement is the *spirit to sacrifice*. One must learn to sacrifice, to forgo and to lose. One must do this in all cases. Sacrifice leads to love.

“What does sacrifice mean? Man is always being pulled by the five elements. To withdraw the mind from these forces and to direct it to spiritualism is the spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice envisages avoiding pleasures, excessive talking, speaking ill of others, looking at unwanted things, etc. Annihilation of the self is the greatest sacrifice.

“Every path—karma marg, bhakti marg and gyan marg—envisages sacrifice in a particular manner. So one has to practise sacrifice on every path. Renunciation is essential on every path. It is a form of a great suffering. Initially, a seeker might find it difficult to renounce or to forgo, but once he gets into proper company he develops a taste for renunciation; then he assumes a supreme status. Very few can be like him. He becomes desireless.

“Love and sacrifice are complementary. As a jiva acquires one, he gets the other automatically. Only those who are in love can sacrifice. None else can do that. But love of what kind? Love for him to whom he has surrendered,

whom he has accepted as the lord of his mind. Love initiates a person on the road to sacrifice. We shall take the example of a princess. Attendants do anything for her. She does not have to carry anything, not even a glass of water. But when she becomes a mother, she fondly carries her child with love. It is love that drives a princess to carry her child with pleasure.

“There is an episode of Akbar the Great, the famous emperor of India. Once he told Birbal, his minister, that according to the Hindu faith God incarnates Himself frequently for small things and asked, ‘Why does He not depute others for these jobs?’ Birbal sought permission of the emperor to answer after eight days. Akbar agreed. In the meantime, Birbal got a toy child made of wax perfectly resembling the prince, Akbar’s child. He asked the nurse to come to the court with the ‘baby’ in her arms and drop it before the emperor in a manner as if it happened accidentally. The nurse acted as she had been instructed to. Instantly, Akbar jumped to his feet and picked the child. But when he discovered that it was a toy child he felt abashed. He had no difficulty in realising that it was the doing of Birbal. Then Birbal said to Akbar, ‘Your Majesty, this is the answer to the question put to me a week ago. The love for the prince drove Your Majesty to act that way. There were so many others in the court who could have been ordered to pick the child, instead of Your Majesty doing it. Likewise, it is out of love that the Lord is drawn to His devotees. Instead of sending anyone else, He Himself appears before them.’”

Question: “Sir, the natural order is that sacrifice follows love. This is how it happens in the world. But how does love arise after sacrifice?”

Master: “To forgo anything, to accept suffering and to renounce are the ways of sacrifice on the spiritual path. The result of all these endeavours is love. When a person sacrifices with pleasure, love arises in his heart. Everybody must have experienced this sometime or the other in his life. When a jiva cheerfully accepts sufferings and trains himself in sacrifice, love arises in his heart in due course. God values suffering very much. Kunti, the aunt of Lord Krishna had demanded from Krishna the boon of suffering, because one constantly remembers God in suffering. She said that suffering is more valuable because it reminds one of the Lord. One must accept suffering as one’s companion and train oneself in sacrifice.”

A devotee: “Sir, if God gives us suffering, He must also grant us capacity to bear. Otherwise, it is very difficult to bear the suffering.”

Master: “The Lord disapproves of this attitude. He says that he first grants

capacity to bear and then sends suffering. He makes man unconscious at the time of death so that he may bear the pain of death. To say that God must first grant us the capacity to bear is to criticise God. We have finite intelligence, and God is infinite intelligence. How do we have the ability to find fault with Him? He has been taking care of us. He is concerned about us. Does a mother care less for her child? Is it right for a child to criticise his mother? In what way has the Lord ignored us? He has done everything. All that we need is right understanding, faith and subtle insight.”

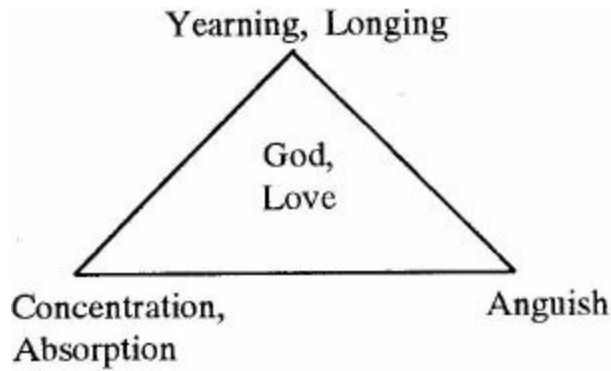
Question: “Sir, when does a jiva accept suffering with pleasure?”

Master: “A jiva can cheerfully accept suffering when he is sufficiently advanced in love and devotion.”

Question: “Sir, when does a jiva regard suffering as suffering?”

Master: “Suffering exists as long as ego is present. Ego vanishes when a jiva attains concentration or absorption. And suffering disappears when a jiva attains absorption or anguish or yearning. When a jiva attains any one of these three things—absorption, anguish, yearning—the other two automatically come to him, and unite him with the Lord. The Lord is at the centre of these three things and a jiva may approach Him through any of these and he will realise Him.

“A seeker on this path must accept suffering in abundance. Bear firmly in your mind that this is the path of suffering. He who does not accept suffering, cannot traverse this path. Those who have not abandoned the habits of the gross state and not accepted the habits of the subtle state will find this path very difficult. Those who do not forgo physical comforts, cannot traverse this path. He who is keen on his progress must forgo physical comforts. The pleasures of the world are transitory. Sufferings lead in the direction of the Lord. Therefore, seek those who are rich in suffering. You must respect them, love them and surrender yourself to them. They will not leave you, whereas others might. Accept them as your guide and they will lead you to salvation.



“A jiva should not avoid suffering. He must train himself in suffering and make suffering his companion, and that will bring him good. In addition, he must bear in mind these four things: (i) Penitence (*tobah, tobah*), (ii) Constant yearning for the beloved, (iii) Desirelessness, and (iv) Exclusive dependence on God (*Tawakul Khuda*). Whatever his status, a jiva must bear these four things in his mind.”

Question: “Sir, what are the advantages of suffering?”

Master: “A jiva is bound with ego. Sufferings help to lose the ego. The Lord appears when ego vanishes. The two cannot stay together.

“To lose ego or one’s being amounts to losing one’s head. The precious thing like love cannot be obtained without sacrificing one’s head. If one can get the precious thing like love with the sacrifice of one’s head, that is an easy bargain. The Revered Master has said something on this subject in a lyric. (*addressing the singers*) Please sing that lyric ‘The trader of Oneness has purchased’”

Singers: The trader of Oneness

Has purchased anguish,
Has purchased fortitude.
In the bazaar of anguish
Heads are bartered,
That is the price of love.
At the stall of the beloved,
Treasure of heart is submitted,
For the purchase of *nam*¹.
Eyes are the agent,
Mind is the trader,

Nam is the commodity traded.
You may barter with one head,
That is not enough, O Qutab,
The grace of satguru is wanted.

1 spirituality

Master: “Please note that the Revered Master says that a head offered as the price in the bargain is not enough. The bargain is possible, or one earns love, only when the satguru bestows his grace. Struggles, strivings and sufferings are good and necessary, but one earns love in this trade only when these are approved and accepted by the beloved. The trade of love is the supreme trade.

“Love is supreme. Until a seeker attains love, he has to take rebirths and wander. A jiva realises God when he obtains love, or else he is consigned to the grave and his life goes waste. But if a jiva realises God and then enters the grave, the people bow before his grave. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Those who remember God the whole night,
Their dust, O! Latif, is venerated,
And millions come to bow down to it.”

The Master then asked the singers to sing some songs. These were:

I

If you are a lover,
Bring the rain of love;
If you are interested in your life,
Do not enter this path.
Sacrifice the self entirely,
This is not the place to boast,
Maintain faith firmly,
The breeze of love is intoxicating.
Cry day and night,
Must cry for the beloved,

The bargain is not accepted
Without the barter of head.
I have done nothing,
The life has been wasted,
It is not right for me
To rest in forgetfulness.
This time is opportune,
You will wail thereafter,
Time missed does not return,
Your wailing then will be of no avail.
Tell your murshid
Your present condition and state,
The murshid of Sachal¹ is perfect,
He is sage Abdullah.

¹ name of the poet

II

Separation of a breath from the beloved,
This is not the way of the lovers.
Being without vision of the beloved,
The mind has no rest and peace.
Lovers fear not at all
Defame and disrepute of self.
Hamal² does not need in the world
Anything except the beloved.

² name of the poet

III

How do the folks know
The pangs of love,

People think love is fun,
Or a child's play.
Lovers jump into flames,
Are burnt like the moths,
Only they know the secret,
The mystery that is love.
How does the eye know,
Taste and glamour of sword,
He knows not the taste of blade
Who is not cut with the blade.
People think lightly,
Love is marketable,
They turn back quickly,
When they learn the cost.
Who will take care, O Ghulam¹
Of the patient of love?
But despair not my heart,
Beloved will cure with His appearance.

¹ name of the poet

IV

Be ready, O seeker,
The cross is calling you.
Come with your head decorated,
Also the fire of love within,
And mount the point of spear,
The cross is calling you.
Forget gain and loss,
Concentrate on the primordial sound,
Realise that the world is a myth,
The cross is calling you.
Forget virtues and praise,
Avoid what brings credit,
Seek defame with pleasure,

The cross is calling you.
If you wish to realise the Self,
And that the world is a grand dream,
Jump the barrier of duality,
The cross is calling you.
Seek refuge in love,
Treat all religions alike,
See light and get liberation,
The cross is calling you.

After the music was over, the group offered *arti* to Lord Krishna with great devotion and fervour. Bowing to the portrait, everybody sought the blessings of the Lord. That marked the end of Janmashtami celebrations. Nothing but love was discussed the whole day. Love or the incarnation of love, mean the same thing.

MEETING 24

ANGUISH

(Dard)

NEW DELHI 24 August, 1952

The Master, in the company of a few devotees, was on a visit to his daughter in New Delhi. Here, too, satsang was arranged in the morning and in the evening. A number of people came to attend satsang and to meet the Master. Among the frequent visitors was a new comer who had become so much attached to the Master that he visited him every evening before returning home from his work. He was a devotee of another Sufi saint in Sind.

One day he invited the Master and his group to lunch at his residence. He received them with immense respect and warmth. All were seated on a *duree* in a hall. Taking a seat by the side of the Master, the host took out a piece of paper and with tears in his eyes addressed him.

Host: “Sir, you have shown immense kindness to this sinner by coming here with your devotees and have graced us all. I did not deserve such generosity. Sir, today, I am seeing the image of my murshid in your face. Previously I had thought that I had left my satguru for good in Sind, but my joy knows no bounds when I see him in you. It is a matter of great luck that you have bestowed grace upon me. My dear sir, when you visit others, you are presented with bouquets and garlands of flowers. But I haven’t brought a bouquet of flowers for you. I have, instead, a bouquet of words to welcome you. May I have your kind permission to read that?”

Master: “Please do.”

The host started reading his write-up. He sobbed as he read it, and tears rolled down his cheeks. The write-up was full of love and anguish. Nowhere before had the Master received this kind of welcome. It was a lesson to us. It was not a formality or show. It was a long write-up in praise of his murshid. Everyone in the gathering was touched with what he said.

The Master, an ocean of mercy, was suddenly aroused with emotion into a special mood of generosity and he addressed the gathering.

Master: “Today, if the Lord were to ask you to demand what you wanted,

what would you ask for? Let each one of you think for himself and then speak. We start with the men on the left side. Let each one put his demand.”

He asked the host to start. The host was puzzled with this unexpected offer. He had not thought about it in advance. But others got time to think and to be ready. The host said, “Sir, let it be always like today. I want you.” The next person who was related to the Master and was a follower of Radhaswami faith said, “I want light within.” The third person said, “I want the Lord to bestow love upon me.” One person recited a *shloka* demanding everything on the earth and in the heavens. Interrupting him, the Master said, “You want nothing. You are very shy. Tell in a few words.” The next person said, “Sir, I want what you consider the best for me.” It became obvious that none in the gathering demanded wealth, except one person who demanded realisation and wealth together. After everybody had finished, someone put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, did we put the right demands to the Lord? What should we have asked for?”

Master: “It should be anguish (*dard*). Only one amongst you has made the correct demand. There is nothing better than anguish. Everything is supposed to have been attained if there is anguish in mind. Nothing can be attained in the absence of anguish.”

We were surprised at what the Master said. Someone put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, what is that anguish that cannot be matched by anything else?”

Master: “Anguish is highly valued by fakirs. They cheerfully accept suffering. Anguish is highly praised by fakirs.”

Having said this the Master became quiet. The atmosphere was charged with serenity. Everybody remained still. After a while the Master asked the singers if they could sing some songs on a (*dard*). The following songs were sung:

I

He who is possessed with love
Seeks no other learning.
The lovers are not at all concerned
With differences of religion and irreligion.

Raising the slogan of Truth (*Haq*),
They cheerfully accept the cross.

II

Listen, my friends and dear ones,
The lovers are possessed with love.
They have realised the Self,
And are ever absorbed in the Lord.
They are mocked and rebuked,
And are defamed for their love.
Being true in their love,
They are pathetic and pleasing.

III

I have been left desolate
On a steep and arduous path,
I cry for you in agony,
Kindly come to me,
I cannot cross the hills.

IV

When love discards destiny,
What can intellect do?
Those who are struck with love
Are always crying in anguish.
Scholars and veterans
Are nonentities before love.
Love made prince Ranjhu
Abdicate his throne.
Yusaf was sold in market
Because of the love.
Saints seek defame,
And accept humility.
Love made Shah Mansoor
Accept martyrdom.

The boat of anguish and love,
O Bedil, takes quickly to destination.

V

I sacrifice myself to those
Who spend life in self mortification¹,
The mind of Sachal² is afflicted,
He belongs to the beloved.

1 self-mortification in the form of forgoing food, water and sleep

2 name of the poet

VI

If you ask me,
Better are mortification and suffering.
Your difficulties are fewer,
If you take the path of love.

VII

Those days were better
That I spent in mortification,
Every moment, says Sachal,
I remembered the beloved.
I accepted sufferings
For a meeting with the beloved.

VIII

How can I abandon anguish
That granted me wisdom.
As I make comparisons,
Sufferings excel comforts.

IX

My strivings and endeavours
Will grant me a new birth.
In the mirror of *La Illa*³
The Beloved will be revealed.
Only an ecstatic lover
Shall bear the weight of anguish.
Only the brave like Mansoor
Shall cheerfully accept martyrdom.
He who merges in *Hoo Hoo*¹
Shall understand the Truth.
The learned like Sheikh Sanan
Shall wear the sacred thread.
Only the seeker of anguish, O Bedil²
Shall sing the song of Self-realisation.

3 There is nothing except Allah or God.

1 the Primordial sound; the Big Bang

2 name of the poet

When the music was over, lunch was served to all. After lunch we returned to our place. Satsang started at 5 p.m. Someone put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, you had stressed anguish (*dard*) during the discussion this morning. The songs on this theme were also excellent. But, sir, we fail to grasp what you had said. Could you kindly devote some more time to this theme this evening? We have some questions to ask.”

Master: “Please put your questions.”

Question: “Sir, what is anguish (*dard*)?”

Master: “Suffering, longing, yearning, ardour, uneasiness and restlessness for meeting the beloved constitute anguish (*dard*). The thirsting desire, choking eagerness to meet the beloved is called anguish. Love, too, is anguish. A jiva can gain nothing so long as he does not develop anguish for meeting the beloved. Anguish must arise first. It helps in the progress towards the Lord. Anguish is very much liked by the Lord. A jiva must first try to attain that.”

Question: “Sir, can you illustrate this with an example?”

A devotee: “Sir, I can present a very good example, if I have the permission.”

Master: “Yes, please do.”

The devotee: “Sir, once a seeker had asked Sri Ramakrishna how God could be realised. Sri Ramakrishna answered by quoting an example of some other saint who had been put this very question by a disciple. The saint took the disciple to a lake and both of them got into the water. Suddenly the saint pressed the disciple’s head under water. After a few moments he released him and the disciple raised his head and stood up. The guru asked him, ‘How did you feel?’ The disciple said, ‘Oh! I thought I should die. I was panting for breath.’ The guru said, ‘When you feel like that for God, then you will know you haven’t long to wait for His vision’.”¹

¹ cf. *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, p. 674

Master: “That is an excellent example. The restlessness of this kind, the restlessness to meet the beloved—like that of a fish out of water—is called anguish (*dard*). Progress comes after this kind of restlessness or when anguish is developed within.”

Question: “Sir, how does a jiva progress on account of anguish? What does he attain in that case?”

Master: “A jiva attains a lot on account of anguish. When anguish arises in him, he undergoes a great transformation. He loses sleep, there are always tears in his eyes, and he likes nothing but the longing for his beloved. His heart becomes very gentle and he develops absorption in the beloved. Let a jiva develop restlessness and absorption in his beloved and then see how the beloved takes care of him. Anguish leads to annihilation of the self. The jiva becomes very humble. God has everything except humility. He who goes to the Lord with a gift of humility, is loved by Him. Humility does not arise in the absence of anguish. One must develop anguish in order to realise the beloved.”

Question: “Sir, does anguish result in changes in a jiva other than those you have mentioned?”

Master: “Anguish causes such yearning and restlessness, interest and zeal, drive and emotions in a jiva that no obstacle can stay on his way. He crosses all obstacles with the force of his drive and emotions. At that stage a jiva

becomes oblivious of his body and crosses all obstacles. Fakirs have progressed under such conditions. (*addressing the singer*) Please sing that song: Consume your body with ardour.”

The singers sang the following songs/couplets:

I

Consume your body with ardour,
And then peep within yourself,
Except anguish all is tasteless,
And yearning is most gratifying.
If you wish to strive,
Spend your nights in mortification,
You will then be blessed
With anguish in torrents.
Maintain vigil on your breath
And enjoy the mysteries arising there,
Lose the self in love
And enjoy pleasures of love.
Maintain yourself faithfully in oneness,
Abandon wandering and pilgrimage,
Listen to the voice of love, O Bedil¹,
Yearning in love is enchanting.

¹ name of the poet

II

Avoid them, O friends
Who ignore self-mortification²,
Keep away from them
Who keep company with comforts.

² self-mortification in the form of forgoing food, water and sleep

III

Spend your days in mortification
As long as you live,
Always remember the promise
You had given your beloved.

IV

I seek them
Who seek mortification,
Sachal³ belongs to them
Who excel in ardour.

3 name of the poet

Question: “Sir, what is the apparent state of a person in anguish?”

Master: “It is difficult to describe him. He is sobbing and wailing he is consumed in the thoughts of the beloved; he is continually weeping. A person in anguish does not forget the beloved even for a moment. He is always alert. How can he forget his beloved? Here, I am reminded of an episode.

“Once a fakir, while passing through a street, heard sounds of mourning and wailing. (People then used to hire professional women for mourning.) Hearing the noise of mourning, the fakir stopped there and started mourning and beating his chest. After a while the mourning stopped and the women came out. The fakir said to them, ‘Why did you stop mourning? I do not feel relieved. You ought to have continued it for some time more.’ The women said, ‘Our time is over.’ The fakir cried, ‘Is there any end to anguish? I had just picked up. Please tell me what you were mourning for?’ The women said, ‘We were mourning for someone who has passed away.’ With lament the fakir said, ‘You were mourning for something transient and perishable. I thought you were mourning for yourself having been separated from the Lord for a long time. I am sorry you had raised such a hue and cry for that which is not lasting. Had you lamented for the Lord, he would have been pleased.’”

Question: “Sir, everybody laments and weeps for children, wife, wealth, etc. What is the kind of weeping God is pleased with?”

Master: “It is the weeping with anguish, accompanied by choking eagerness or thirsting desire to meet the beloved, that pleases the Lord. That kind of weeping is very touching. Here again, I am reminded of an example. A group of children were playing on a road. One of them got hurt and he started crying. His mother was cooking in the kitchen. Hearing the cries, she instantly rushed out and lifted the child in her arms. Some days later, the child again cried and wept outside while playing, but his mother did not come out. After sometime the child went to his mother and weeping before her asked her why she had not come to him, while on the previous occasion she had rushed out leaving the pot on the fire. The mother replied, ‘There was no anguish in your cries today. Those appeared artificial. I could make out that you had quarrelled with your playmates and were unnecessarily weeping for nothing. There was a difference in your cries on the two occasions.’

“When a jiva weeps with anguish, the Lord comes to him in an instant. Then the jiva enjoys immense bliss. When a mother lifts her child to her bosom, the child forgets his pain and troubles. What would be the nature of bliss when God Himself comes and meets the disciple? This cannot be described. All this is due to anguish.

“O jiva, you must have anguish in your heart. You must fill your heart with anguish, and then you can freely go where you wish to. Just as a lifebelt attached to body helps a person cross a river, so does anguish in heart help him cross the ocean of the universe.”

Question: “Sir, you have praised anguish very much, but where to obtain anguish from?”

Master: “At long last you have put a very pertinent question. A person has to go to a shop according to what he wants. He cannot get cloth at a grocer’s shop or grocery at a cloth merchant’s. So is the case with anguish. A person can get it from those who are in anguish. He has to be in the company of those who have lost themselves in anguish. When he remains in their company, serves them, pleases them and surrenders himself to them, then only they might take pity on him and suggest to him the way to obtain anguish. Having obtained directions, he has to strive and endeavour. Nothing can be attained in the absence of endeavour and striving. Even an ordinary thing like butter is obtained with certain endeavours. One has to obtain milk, boil it, keep it for curdling and then churn it very hard. So is the case with regard to anguish. One is accepted by the Lord only when one is continually afflicted with anguish. Such is the importance and sanctity of anguish.

(*addressing the singers*) Please sing some songs on anguish.”
The singers sang the following songs:

I

Let not a single breath
Be free from anguish, O lover.
Realise the Witness Self,
And forget your body.
Sacrifice your head in love
If you are eager for Me,
You will have the taste of love
And be a seeker of Truth.
Realising your true self,
Be the agent of all works,
And be in quest, O Sachal¹
Of constant vision of the Beloved.

¹ name of the poet

II

Let love be the physician
For the disease of duality.
All impurities are washed,
All illusions are lost.
The veil of ego is lifted,
And the vision is obtained.
The beloved stays in heart,
If one tries to peep in.

III

Love is a divine gift,
Anguish is not marketed.
True renunciation is good,

Learning and scholarship are easy,
The path of love is arduous,
Anguish is a divine pleasure.
Avoid not suffering,
Abandon ideas of the self,
Erect a seat for the beloved within,
All other thoughts are sinful.
You keep collecting wealth,
Yet you call yourself pure.
Take the path of love,
All else is darkness.
The priests keep reading,
Arguing, discussing,
But lovers keep aloof,
For love seeks God only.
Be like a moth in love, O Bedil¹
And you will realise the beloved.
A breath spent in yearning,
Life without that is wasteful.

¹ name of the poet

After these songs, the hymn to the Absolute was recited in chorus. And that marked the end of the satsang today.

As it was hot inside, I, along with an elderly devotee, went to the terrace to enjoy fresh air. My mind was engaged with what had been discussed during the day, in the morning and in the evening. I said to my friend, “I fail to grasp what transpired during the day, specially at noon when the Master wanted everyone to ask for whatever he or she wanted.” My friend said, “I am not surprised, though such instances have been very rare. You are lucky that you had an opportunity today. On two or three previous occasions I had experienced similar mood of some saints when they were aroused with emotions and had showered their grace on those in their presence.” I requested him to narrate his previous experiences. He said: “Once, Sai Hadi Baksh¹ and the Master, alongwith some devotees, were going in a boat to attend the Urs of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz at Sewhan in Sind. On the way, they

halted along the bank. It seems that the Master, on receiving a divine command, asked the devotees what they would ask for if the Lord were to propose to them to demand whatever they wanted? The Master's cousin said, 'I would ask the Lord to accept me as his beloved.' Another devotee said, 'I would like to be contented with the will of the Lord.' Some devotees asked for beauty or love or service or contentment etc. When all the devotees had made their demands, someone asked the Master, 'Sir, what would you ask for?' The Master replied, 'Suffering.' Someone further asked, 'Sir, what does this mean?' The Master replied, 'It is easy to know God, but to know the Self is a great suffering. When one sees the sun, the moon, the stars, etc one thinks of the Creator or God. The existence of nature or creation makes us realise the existence of the Creator or God. But to realise the Self, or to realise the self as the Creator or Allah is a very difficult task. Nothing can be more difficult than that. He who realises the Self, faces the greatest suffering or difficulty.' Then someone requested Sai Hadi Baksh to tell what he would ask for. He said, 'It should be as it is, no change, no increase and no decrease.' That is the state of Truth (*Sat awastha*). It was sunset by this time. A milkman with a pot of milk on his head, suddenly appeared there. Bowing to Sai Hadi Baksh, he said, 'Kindly accept my humble gift. I live in a village nearby and carry milk to the town to sell it. Today, I lost my way and happen to be here. It is dark now and it will be difficult for me to find my way. It seems that it is the will of the Lord that the milk be distributed here. I pray that my request be accepted.' Addressing the Master, Sai Hadi Baksh said, 'The Lord has sent the pot of milk on time. It must be presumed that the demands of the group have been accepted by the Lord'."

1 grandson of Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah and spiritual successor after Hazrat Sai Roshan Ali Shah in the same lineage

As my friend finished his narration, the Master, alongwith some devotees came to the terrace. We could not discuss the topic any more. My friend took leave of us and left.

MEETING 25

LOVE 4

To Please the Beloved

SHANTI NAGAR 13 January, 1957

As I entered the hall, I found it was packed with devotees. The Master was seated in a chair. There was a team of singers—about twelve of them—seated to his left. The following song was being sung:

How shall I please you?
How shall I persuade you?
Tell me the way,
O the wise.
Shall I be a Hindu,
And worship idols in temples,
Take holy dips at Ganga and Yamuna,
Wear sacred thread round my neck,
Apply *tilak* on my forehead?
Shall I be a Muslim
And offer prayers thoroughly,
Build mosques and bow to you,
If that should please you?
Shall I be a dancer,
Beautifully dressed,
Carry musical instruments,
And dance before you?
Come, O my beloved,
Let us reconcile,
Be pleased with Suleman¹
Though undeserving,
Yet yours I* am.

1 name of the poet

* Feminine gender. In Indian languages, the pronoun 'I' is differently used in masculine gender and in feminine gender. The fakir says '*main tumhari hoon*' and not '*main tumhara hoon*'.

The group sang a few more songs. It was led by a young man about 35 years of age. After finishing the singing, the young man made a humble submission to the Master.

Young man: "Sir, we are thirsting for nectar-like words from you. We haven't had this privilege before. We shall be grateful to you for the kind favour."

Master: "As you please. I will say a few words. (*addressing the gathering*) Do you know this young man? He is the son of the famous singer-saint of Sind, the late Bhai Kanwar Ram Sahib. His name is Bhai Pesuram. Like us, this young man, too, left his home in Sind and came to India. His father and I were very good friends; both of us had grown up under the personal care of Sai Vasanram Sahib. There, we had learnt to serve, to sing and to keep awake at night. His son has graced us with his visit. We are immensely grateful to him.

"Who in Sind did not know Bhagat Kanwar Ram Sahib? He was famous for his music and generosity. The lyric sung today was his favourite one. It is composed by Suleman Fakir. The first two lines of the lyric say:

How shall I please you?

How shall I persuade you?

"The seeker is requesting his beloved (satguru, murshid) how he (seeker) can please him. But why should a seeker be concerned or anxious about pleasing his satguru? It is because the seeker realises that his progress depends upon the pleasure of the satguru. In the mundane life, too, the progress of a person depends upon the pleasure of his seniors. A seeker has to strive and endeavour, but he gains nothing unless the endeavour is approved and accepted by the satguru. The progress of a seeker depends upon the pleasure of his satguru. Just see how *guru kripa* (grace of the guru) has been praised and valued in Guru Granth Sahib. (*addressing a devotee*) Please recite the sloka 'If satguru be kind (*satguru hoi dayal*)'."

Devotee: "If satguru be kind, devotion enhances,

If satguru be kind, one withers not,

If satguru be kind, one knows no suffering,
If satguru be kind, one enjoys all comforts,
If satguru be kind, fear not death,
If satguru be kind, one is always happy,
If satguru be kind, one gets all powers,
If satguru be kind, one realises the Truth.”

Master: “Please see the variety of gains that accrue to a seeker as a result of the grace of the satguru. What should a seeker do to please his satguru or earn his grace?

“Let us take the example of a girl who is just married. She might be knowing many things, but if she does not know what her in-laws want, she is not likely to be appreciated by them. If the in-laws are poor, they would appreciate her if she knew cooking. In case she did not, because she had not learnt it in her rich parents’ home, she would not be liked by her in-laws. She has to learn these arts in order to earn the pleasure of the in-laws. Likewise, it is necessary for a seeker to earn the pleasure of his satguru. Many seekers have satgurus, but very few learn the ways to please the satguru. The life of a jiva is a sheer waste if he does not please his satguru, no matter if he pleases others in millions. What are the ways or the skills a seeker must learn to please his satguru?

“The fakir is putting this question in this lyric; he is asking his satguru how he (seeker) could please him. He (seeker) suggests a few alternatives and asks his satguru if any of these would please him. Eventually, he comes to the right method and mentions it in the last line which says:

Though undeserving,
Yet yours I am.

He does not use the *I* in the masculine gender when he says ‘yours *I* am’. Though he is a man, yet the fakir conceives himself as a woman and uses the word *I* in the feminine gender. A seeker who is anxious to progress on the path of devotion (bhakti marg), must conceive himself as a woman and his satguru as the male spouse. He can easily please his satguru with this firm faith.

“There lived a fakir in Sukkur (Sind). Some people asked him, ‘Sir, you

are using a saintly garb. But how shall we believe that you are a saint at heart? Won't you give us a proof?' The fakir agreed. He built a tower (minaret). It is known as *Masoom Shah jo Minar*. It still exists in the city of Sukkur. He put on a female garb and went up on the tower. Conceiving God as husband, the fakir prayed to Him and then jumped from the tower. He landed safely unhurt. The female form is very dear to the Lord.

"I shall also cite to you the example of Bulla Shah. Even as a young boy, Bulla Shah had a strong urge to have a murshid. After searching for some time he accepted as murshid a fakir, who was a gardener and belonged to Umti (Arai) group or caste. Arai was supposed to be a low group among the Muslims. Bulla Shah himself was a Syed, which is considered a high group among the Muslims. When the members of Bulla Shah's family came to know of it, they were annoyed and they continually taunted and rebuked him. Bulla Shah has reported this in one of his lyrics. (*addressing a singer*) Please sing that song."

Singer: Sisters and sisters-in-law

Came to persuade Bulla,
We are Syeds, descendants of Ali,
Why do you bring disgrace?
Your ancestors were pure and holy,
You keep relations with Arai, the low status,
People come to serve us,
Why do you wish ill fame?

The Master asked the singer to stop here.

Master: "Bulla Shah did not pay attention to these taunts for some time. But women are usually adamant. They continued to taunt and nag him. Eventually, Bulla Shah began to waver and his faith began to shake. His preceptor wanted to put him to a test. He asked him to cleanse the latrine. That was like the last straw. Bulla Shah lost his faith. He felt that his murshid had paid scant regard to his being a Syed and insulted him. Bulla Shah said to his murshid, 'I would like to leave this place. Please take back your spiritual gifts. I am no more your disciple, nor are you my murshid'. The murshid tried to persuade Bulla Shah but in vain. Then he said, 'Let Bulla be cold.' When Bulla Shah returned home, he felt very desolate. Earlier he used to get up very early and have visions, but all these things stopped happening. He realised a vacuum within. He became restless and uncomfortable. He felt the

difference and realised his mistake. Unable to get rest, he left his home. He wandered aimlessly and started thinking how he could reconcile himself to his murshid and please him. He realised that all this was the result of the nagging by the women at his home. He decided to win back his previous status through a woman.

“He recalled that a dancing girl used to sing before his murshid every Friday. The murshid was highly pleased with her music. When she sang, the fakir would go into ecstasy and generously bless her. In that state he would grant whatever she requested for. Bulla Shah decided to attain his purpose through her.

“Discarding the clothes appropriate to the status of a Syed, he put on very poor clothes and approached the dancing girl for a job under her. When she asked him about the wages, Bulla Shah said that he would accept no wages. She was surprised at it. Looking at his face, she could instantly make out that he belonged to a good family but his tattered clothes appeared mystifying to her. She suspected something which she thought must be found out. So she gave him a job under her.

“Bulla Shah served her very sincerely. Though very good food was served in the house, he took very ordinary food and accepted no wages. She watched him for some months. Seeing his pitiable condition, she pressed him to tell her what was wrong with him. As she broke into tears, Bulla Shah narrated to her his tale of woe and the purpose that had brought him to her. He told her that he could not bear the pangs of his separation from his murshid and that he had been unhappy and without peace since he left his murshid. She was moved by his spirit of love and renunciation and complimented him. She sought his pardon for engaging a Syed under her when she herself came from a low group. She promised to teach him music.

“In a few months Bulla Shah learnt to sing well. One day the dancing girl asked him to dress like a girl and accompany her to sing before the fakir. There she sang first. Then she sought permission of the fakir to introduce a new singer who sang very well. The fakir agreed. Dressed as a girl Bulla Shah sang a song.” (*the Master asked the singer to sing that song*).

Singer: I wail and moan, O my beloved,

Your love makes me dance.

Ornaments on my feet

And a beautiful ladies shirt.

Bangles on my arms
And a ring on my nose,
Look at me, my dear,
It is for your sake
I have assumed this guise.
I shall put on a *dhoti*,
Sacred thread around my neck,
Tilak on the forehead,
Go to the temple,
And bow before the idol.
If love be my deity,
I bow again and again.
You be with me,
So I be a *suhagin*¹,
And in love
Be called as yours.
I take the drink of union,
O the hero of the world,
I have accepted the taunts.
Anguish, the mullah, gave the prayer call,
The lover and beloved joined together,
At the mosque built in Oneness,
Where love, the *imam*, led the prayer,
And the hymn of non-duality was recited.
You have captured my heart by your open hair,
And have captivated me by your glances.
I am forsaken without faults,
Kindly tell me, asks Bulla,
What at all have you gained?

1 a woman having her husband living with her

Master: “The fakir instantly recognised Bulla by his voice and called, ‘O my Bulla.’ Bulla Shah ran to him, fell at his feet and wept. The fakir blessed him saying, ‘Let Bulla be the fire of love.’ He then graced him with greater powers.

“Bulla Shah then said that he who would call him Shah (the title for a Syed) would go to hell. It was his ego of being of the higher status that had brought his ruin. (*addressing the singer*) Please sing again, and in full, the song that we had left halfway.”

Singer: Sisters and sisters-in-law

Came to persuade Bulla,
We are Syeds, the descendants of Ali,
Why do you bring disgrace?
Your ancestors were pure and holy,
You keep relations with Arai, the low status,
People come to serve us,
Why do you wish ill fame?
He who calls Bulla Syed
Shall go to hell,
He who calls Bulla an Arai
Shall live in heaven.
Better than Bulla is the hearth,
Where loaves are baked.
Throw dust on his face,
Who asks Bulla his caste.

Master: “When a jiva conceives himself as a low and humble being, and also assumes himself as a woman and the satguru as the husband (*purusha*) and undertakes his practice with that spirit, he attains his goal. This form is very dear to the Lord, and to all others.”

Question: “Sir, why is the guise or disposition of a woman so dear to the Lord and why should a seeker assume the disposition of a woman?”

Master: “God has granted different attributes to all. Man has been bestowed with courage and fortitude, and woman with the qualities of sacrifice and

forbearance. The female form is dear to the Lord because the attributes of self-surrender and self-sacrifice predominate in that form. One has to completely surrender and sacrifice oneself on the divine path. A woman can do that extremely well. When a seeker assumes himself as a woman, these attributes arise in him and he is able to surrender himself to the Lord.”

An elderly devotee: “Sir, you have rightly said so. When Mira Bai¹ came to Brindaban², a monk did not permit her to visit a temple of Lord Krishna, on the plea that only men were allowed entry and not women. Mira Bai sent word to the monk that there was only one man (*purusha*) in Brindaban and he was Krishna, and all other jivas there were his *gopis*. A jiva who assumed himself to be man (*purusha*) had no right to be in Brindaban. Hearing the words of Mira Bai, and seeing her love and devotion, everybody felt ashamed. She was allowed to enter the temple.”

1 the famous saint-poetess of the sixteenth century

2 a city in North India where Lord Krishna spent His early years

Master: “A jiva cannot progress on the bhakti marg (path of love and devotion) unless he bears this attitude.”

Question: “Sir, what should be the disposition of a jiva who has assumed himself as a woman so that he might please the husband—the satguru?”

Master: “A very good question indeed. I appreciate it. How does a woman in the ordinary life please her husband? First, she remains obedient to her husband, and, secondly, she cultivates such qualities as are dear to her husband. The woman-like seeker must behave exactly in that manner. He must remain obedient to his satguru and cultivate such qualities as are dear to his satguru.”

Question: “Sir, Bulla Shah pleased his satguru with music. But everybody does not know music. What should others do.?”

Master: “There are many ways to please the beloved. Some have pleased their preceptors with service. The example of Guru Amardas Sahib is outstanding in this context. He served his satguru—Guru Angad Dev—so well that being pleased with him, Guru Angad Dev granted him the seat of the guru. There are innumerable ways to please the beloved. I know of an example where a seeker used to make stories and tell them to his satguru. The seeker was enlightened and he had undertaken very hard spiritual practices.

Being a writer and poet, he used to construct stories extempore and each story lasted for a few months. His satguru used to listen to him with interest and attention. The characters portrayed had such qualities as courage, sobriety, bravery, sharp intelligence, love, etc which the satguru liked and appreciated. The seeker pleased his beloved in this manner.

“Some follow and practise the precept with thoroughness and adopt such conduct and lifestyle that they earn the pleasure of the beloved. Some do so by weeping continually. Some remain awake for nights together, yearning for the beloved and thus they succeed in winning the beloved. Thus there are many ways to please the satguru. A seeker must clearly know what pleases his satguru and what his inclinations are and then he should adopt a particular course of action. If the satguru likes silence, the seeker should practise silence. If he likes politeness and humility he, too, should practise these things. Following this method, the seeker will succeed in winning his satguru. But in all cases, his disposition should be that of a woman towards her husband.”

Then the Master said *Hari Om* to all. The team of singers paid obeisance to the Master, sought his blessings and left. Thus ended the satsang this morning.

MEETING 26

LOVE 5

The Advent Of Love

SHANTI NAGAR 27 March, 1956

A celebration of the death anniversary of Bhai Gobindram Sahib¹ is an important event here. It is a programme of three days. Today was the second and the main day of the programme.

¹ A detailed account of the life of Bhai Gobindram Sahib appears in Meeting 33.

Bhai Gobindram Sahib, too, was a disciple of the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah and had attained a very high spiritual status. Thus he was a co-disciple of the Master. He left his mortal frame in 1921, and after his passing away, a spiritual seat (*gaddi*) was established under a divine command, by Sai Roshan Ali Shah, who was then the spiritual successor (*sajjadah nashin*) to the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah. The Master was consecrated to this seat on the occasion of the first death anniversary of Bhai Gobindram Sahib in 1922. Since then the death anniversary is formally celebrated every year and on this occasion the Master is ceremoniously consecrated, the focal point of the programme being *dastarband* when a saint ties on the Master's head a turban of ochre cloth with appropriate rites. Many persons—including singers, saints, sadhus—come from distant places to attend the anniversary celebration.

Today, the programme in the morning included reading from Sri Ramayana from 9 to 10. It was followed by devotional singing.

The songs selected were:

Whom shall I tell
The unconcern of the beloved?
Come and see my state,
I fail to describe myself.

He who is suddenly struck
And injured with that sword,
Tells with tears his woes
And the pangs of anguish.
How do the folk know
The anxieties in love?
Only he who drinks
Knows the taste of wine.
Being in love,
I ever keep wandering,
Have lost my consciousness
And am ignorant of the world.
He who sees multiplicity
Has no place in the domain of love,
Only a brave like Mansoor
Knows this mystery.
The wise are unconcerned
With rosary and sacred thread;
All is Allah,
All belongs to the Beloved.
If you desire, O Bedil¹
The vision perpetual,
Do not forsake
The precept of the Master.

And

They are killed,
Hit by the arrow of love,
With dishonour as their ornament,
They forget the world.
Love makes them brave,
They sacrifice the self in love.
Unaware of grace and pleasures,
They are calm in curse and dishonour,
They make their graves while alive,
And are happy in dishonour.

They crave day and night,
And sigh for the beloved,
They talk nothing but of the beloved,
And are happy to realise the Truth.
Crossing the barriers of the world,
They take the path of negation.
And abiding truly by the precept,
They attain the Truth in love.
They seek martyrdom with zeal,
Surrender to the graceful look of murshid,
Have merriment with death,
And are elated in ecstasy.

1 name of the poet

Having finished the songs, the singer made a submission to the Master.

Singer: “Sir, it appears from these lyrics that love strikes suddenly. But I have heard from you earlier that love is earned either through endeavours or through grace.”

Master: “It is true that love is attained either through endeavours or through grace. But how it comes, or how it strikes, or what kind of injury it inflicts, has been described by fakirs in these lyrics. Love does not come by a previous intimation. It comes or strikes suddenly. A fakir has said that it strikes and injures like a sword. Another fakir has said that it hits like the sharp head of an arrow. Both the fakirs are narrating their individual experiences. They cannot make incorrect statements. Both say that it strikes suddenly. It might inflict a mild injury at a place and deep injury elsewhere. There are many more instances of fakirs¹—e.g. Jumma Fakir, Shah Mehmood, Bedil and Bekas—who had been in love with someone or the other.”

1 Sufi saints in Sind

Question: “Sir, when love strikes, does it affect the lover only, or is the

beloved, too, affected?”

Master (*with a smile*): “I will quote a Persian couplet. It says:

*Ishq awal dar dile mashooq
paida me shavad,
Ta na sozad shama, parvana
sheda kheh shavad.*

(*addressing a devotee*) Will you please explain the meaning?”

Devotee: “Sir, it says that love first arises in the beloved. If the flame of a lamp were not there, how would a moth be attracted? Lamp symbolises the beloved and moth the lover.”

Master: “Yes, that is correct. If one has a feeling, the other cannot be spared. If it is not presently manifest, it must be there within, though unnoticed, and it may manifest itself in due course.”

Singer: “Sir, we may accept that love first arises in the beloved. Does it happen in the case of *ishq majazi* (physical love) or does it happen in the case of *ishq haqiqi* (spiritual love) also?”

Master: “It happens in both the cases. In the case of *ishq majazi*, an individual might be the beloved, and in the case of *ishq haqiqi*, God is the beloved. When He inspires and attracts someone, only then the person becomes a lover, not otherwise.”

The music continued thereafter. The songs taken up were:

Do not be in love with the great,
I am uneasy in love,
I did not anticipate the pangs,
Nor visualised the sufferings,
I am simple and know not love,
Love struck me mysteriously.
Come and meet Bekas¹, O beloved,
I am consumed with anguish.

And

My mind is always
Fixed on the beloved,
Every moment I think of him,

Every moment I am in anguish.
People in thousands
Taunt me for this,
I accept with cheer
And ask for more.
Struck by the beloved
My heart bleeds,
I cannot break
The tie with the beloved.
Weeping and wailing, O Sachal²
Is the way of lovers,
How can they be at rest,
Who are in divine love?

1 name of the poet

2 name of the poet

Question: “Sir, there is always a reference to suffering in all accounts of love—be it the case of Sohini Mehiwal, Sassi Punnu, Mumal Rana or Romeo Juliet, or the love lyrics of saints. Why are love and suffering always together?”

Master: “You have put a very good question. It is true that where there is love, there is suffering also. Love is mixed in suffering as cream in milk. Love and God are one. Therefore, suffering is where God is. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

It is never heard,
God is realised without suffering.

Look at the accounts of various saints, lovers, fakirs and you will find that none has realised God without suffering. God can be realised only if one accepts suffering. Suffering is excellent and highly beneficial.”

Question: “Sir, you say that suffering is excellent. But everybody avoids suffering. How, then, do you appreciate suffering?”

Master: “Suffering is wonderful. It benefits a jiva and it removes the impurities in him and leads him from the gross state to the subtle. Let us take

the example of gold. Initially, it is mixed with impurities. It attains the pure state only when it has passed through fire (suffering). We take the example of the ring that women wear in the nose. It is considered an auspicious or sacred symbol of the living husband (*suhag*). It is made of very fine gold wire. Gold attains this state of an auspicious symbol only when it has passed through fire and through very fine holes. Similarly, it is only when a jiva has passed through suffering that he attains subtlety, seeks the Lord, pleases Him, and is absorbed in Him.”

Question: “Sir, what impurities in a jiva are removed with the help of suffering?”

Master: “A jiva contains many impurities—passion, anger, avarice, attachment, ego. Ego is the worst of all, it is the cause of the separation of a jiva from God. God is realised when the ego becomes extinct. A jiva assumes himself to be a body, an entity, something distinct from everything else, and a person of status. When he loses his sense of being and also the feeling of duality, and becomes free from ego, he can attain God. It is the suffering that brings relief from these impurities. Suffering is the guide to spiritualism and to God-realisation. It is wrong to underrate the importance of suffering. And yet you say that suffering is not desirable. Has a woman ever got a child without pains? The birth of a jiva is the result of the pains; he is the product of suffering. He cannot avoid suffering. It is always with him, from birth to death. He has to sustain that. It is only when a jiva cheerfully accepts suffering that he can realise God.”

Question: “Sir, in what forms does suffering appear before a jiva?”

Master: “Suffering comes in various forms. Everybody suffers in his own way. Suffering varies according to the stage a jiva is in—*tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. It also varies according to the path he is set on—*karma* marg, *bhakti* marg and *gyan* marg—and his mental state. It all depends upon the state of a jiva.

“Ego is the greatest impurity. Love brings suffering in the form of dishonour to help a jiva to be relieved of the ego. Other types of suffering, such as loss of wealth etc are not as serious as the loss of honour. Love brings loss of honour. The wordly people prefer status and honour, but the divine lovers are seekers of the Truth and they accept only the Truth. They do not love honour; they love only the Truth. Therefore, love brings dishonour with itself.

“You have read about Ravana. He was a devotee of Mother Goddess

(*Devi*). He sought a boon from Her that he might attain salvation in his present birth. The Goddess told him that he would attain salvation in the seventh birth, and not earlier. Ravana said that it would be difficult for him to wait for so long. He enquired about the way to attain salvation in his present birth. The Goddess again told him that one birth was not adequate for the attainment. He could, however, attain that after three births provided he accepted the path of love and suffering and agreed to bear the loss of honour. He agreed to this condition. Only the select few can appreciate Ravana. The folk cannot do that. Let a jiva first accept dishonour, only then he will be fit for progress on the spiritual path.”

A devotee: “Sir, Swami Sahib¹ has said:

¹ a renowned Sufi saint in Sind

The bargain of love is costly, O Swami,
Costlier than what you can pay,
If you want to purchase it,
Care not for your head,
Accept dishonour and defame,
Live without fear and attachment,
You will thus attain your purpose.”

Question: “Sir, why does love take suffering and not comfort as its companion?”

Master: “Comforts are flimsy and unstable. How can they help a jiva in the extinction of ego? Only suffering can do that. Suffering is lasting, but comforts are transient and temporary. Suffering gives company from birth to death. Lovers seek company of what is lasting and not of what is transient. Fakirs value suffering immensely. A fakir has said:

Give me the gift of suffering,
Give me suffering in dowry.

Fakirs consider suffering a gift; and there must be reasons for that. God rewards a jiva for his endeavours. Worldly people ask for comforts, but fakirs ask for suffering. There must be a purpose underlying that.”

Question: “Sir, what is the purpose, or the secret of fakirs seeking suffering? What do they gain by that?”

Master: “What is loss or suffering to a common man is gain or comfort in a latent form. Suffering carries yearning and anguish with it, and for this reason comforts are insignificant in comparison with suffering. Anguish leads to supreme bliss. Therefore, fakirs forgo all comforts of the world and ask for suffering. The comforts of the world, howsoever great, are insignificant in comparison with the supreme bliss.

“There lived a hermit. He incurred the wrath of a minister as he had refused to do something undesirable for him. To take his revenge, the minister lodged false complaints with the king and eventually succeeded in getting a death sentence passed against the hermit. The hermit was a well-known devotee of Lord Krishna. When people heard of the death sentence, they were shocked and could not believe that the king could award such a severe punishment to a devotee of that status. They, however, hoped that Lord Krishna would save his devotee.

“The day of the execution arrived. Arrangements had been made for the hermit to be crushed under the feet of an elephant. Accepting that as the will of the Lord the hermit lay down at the specified spot. People in large numbers had come to see how the Lord would descend to save his devotee. The elephant was brought in at the scheduled time and it trampled over the body of the hermit killing him instantly. The people were shocked to see that the Lord did not save his devotee. Some questioned the value of devotion. Some said that devotion might have been useful only in the past, while others said that what was recorded in the scriptures might only be a myth.

“In due course the king got a son. The child was speaking at his birth. He was saying, ‘Please crush me under the feet of an elephant.’ All were amazed to see a child speaking at birth and also at what he was saying. The king consulted many priests etc but none could resolve the mystery. Eventually, the king sought the advice of a saint. He told the king that he should ask the child why he was talking like that. On thus being asked, the child replied that in his previous birth he was a hermit and had been crushed under the feet of an elephant under the orders of the king who was his father in the present birth. While he was under the feet of the elephant, Lord Krishna had held him in his arms. He could not describe the bliss of the divine touch. Though he had assumed another birth, he was unable to forget the bliss he had then enjoyed. Remembering that, he was saying, ‘Please get me crushed under the

feet of an elephant', so that he might once again enjoy the bliss.

"To the folk, it appeared that God had not helped his devotee. But those with the inner eye could see what had actually happened. There was bliss underlying the suffering. Through suffering, God had bestowed love upon him and made him a lover. The hermit became a lover of God. A fakir has said:

Compared with comforts,
I value suffering many times more.

"Fakirs have always spoken in favour of suffering; they have said nothing in favour of comforts. It has been said in Guru Granth Sahib:

Suffering is elixir,
Comfort a disease.
(*Dukh daru, sukh rog bhaya*)

"On the spiritual path, suffering has been considered an elixir and comfort a disease. A jiva progresses as a result of suffering. His journey is made easy and the path is illumined. There is anguish embedded in suffering because of which the seeker enjoys bliss. That is the secret underlying suffering."

Question: "Sir, why do you stress the training of a jiva in suffering before the advent of love?"

Master: "A jiva who is already trained in suffering, is not unnerved when love is bestowed on him and suffering comes to him along with love. He does not express discontent nor is he ungrateful; he does not make such mistakes. A jiva who desires to get the invaluable gift of nectar must receive the necessary training in advance so that he may not err when the nectar is bestowed upon him. He should be trained in suffering in advance so that he is able to withstand the impact of love when it strikes him. In the absence of previous training, he cannot gain anything when love is bestowed upon him. Also, he is likely to be harmed if he is not able to absorb love.

"Nothing can be gained in the absence of suffering. Is there a mother who delivers a child without pains? She gets a precious gift only when she bears suffering. Saints and prophets have come after suffering. Why should we avoid suffering?

"Suffering is the primeval stuff; it is the guide on the spiritual path and is like the visa for the journey to the Lord.

“Remember, suffering is synonymous with love; it is another name for love. It must be assumed that the Lord is made of suffering and we can realise Him only when we accept suffering or assume the form of suffering.

“O seeker, you must never think of comforts. If they come to you with glamour and display and you happen to notice them, you must shut the door against them and drive them away. Suffering is peerless and beyond praise. Take the example of the rose. The Lord has granted it a high status among flowers, but only after its acceptance of the company of thorns. Rose garlands are offered to saints. Likewise, if a seeker accepts suffering, the Lord grants him a high status.”

The music was started again. The songs selected were:

My mind is ever longing for you,
I know no rest within
Or without my home.
I am enchanted by Thy beauty,
Be united with me,
The mind is charged with emotions.
I have fallen under anguish,
A merciless butcher it is.
I have sacrificed myself for Thy beauty,
And happily surrendered my head,
Your arrows are so killing,
And cause deep wounds.
Your eyes have captivated me,
And I have lost my senses.
Do not play with the dead,
Bring me to life,
For I am dying in anguish.
The beloved prince¹ has come,
He has cast magic over me,
Captivated my heart with his look,
And I am in love,
Full of anguish.
Abandon false pride, O Bedil²,
Seek your beautiful beloved,
Break the barriers of shame

And see the visions in love.

And

With folded hands I said,
I shall come, O my beloved.
He said, what if you come,
I shall not show my face.
I said, O my beloved,
I am seeker of a glance.
He said, I do not grant
Requests such as these.
I said, O my beloved,
I shall wait at your gate.
He said, I shall not open
The closed door for you.
I said, O my beloved,
Come at my grave.
He said, I shall bypass it
If I happen to go that way.
I said, O my beloved,
I fully surrender to you.
He said, despair not,
I shall certainly be with you.

1 The reference is to Ranjha who abdicated his throne for his beloved Heer. The episode of Heer and Ranjha has been a favourite theme for poets in Sindhi, Urdu and Punjabi languages.

2 name of the poet

Question: “Sir, the word ‘anguish’ has been frequently used in these two lyrics and much has been said about anguish elsewhere, too. What is anguish? When is a lover afflicted with anguish?”

Master: “Anguish is the state of restlessness felt when the lover experiences yearning, eagerness and pangs. It happens when a lover is separated from his beloved. When he is troubled by unrest, he makes such statements as, *I am tortured by anguish*, or *anguish is like a butcher*, and so on.”

Question: “Sir, can you explain with an example?”

Master: “At times we read here the life story of Sri Ramakrishna. We have seen that when Mother Kali appeared before him, he enjoyed bliss. The bliss lasted as long as the vision lasted. As soon as the vision was withdrawn, the bliss, too, disappeared and then he became very restive and yearned for the lasting bliss. In that state of anguish, he used to cry for the Mother seeking her vision again. He became very restive on account of the anguish. After some time, he had a vision which lasted longer. In due course the visions became more frequent and lasted longer and eventually he had the Mother in his vision for all the twenty-four hours. Anguish had persisted with him in varying degrees until he attained the final state. It has been said in Persian:

*Ashqan ra shash nishani, a pishar,
Rang zard, va aah sard, va chasham tar,
Intezari, beqarari, dar badar.*
(Note the six marks of lovers:
Pale looks, cold sighs, wet eyes,
Expectancy, restlessness and wandering).

“This is a familiar couplet and you must have heard it before. It describes the state of a lover in anguish. It says that the first sign of a lover is that he is pale in appearance. His blood is dried up on account of intense weeping, hence he is pale in appearance. That is why bhakti marg is symbolised by yellow colour. Gyan is symbolised by red colour, because it is the hue of the Lord. Karma marg is symbolised by blue colour, like the sky which though non-existent yet appears to be.

“Lovers appear withered and worn out. They are always sobbing and sighing. Tears continually flow from their eyes. They are always helpless, restive and consumed with anxiety.

“Love envisages surrender to the beloved, sacrifice for the beloved, and fondness for the beloved. One has to surrender everything to the beloved. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

I move, if you move me,
I stop, if you stop me.

“Then, one has to sacrifice or renounce everything for the beloved. Renunciation should be mental and not in the form of running away from the

family and from home. In his heart, the seeker should be independent of everything, always absorbed in the love for his beloved, irrespective of the state in which he is apparently placed by the Lord. And we should always sacrifice cheerfully, with pleasure and fondness, and not under compulsion or grudgingly.”

Question: “Sir, a lover gets the vision of the beloved intermittently. Could you kindly tell us what the purpose is behind that?”

Master: “The Lord plays hide-and-seek with His dear ones to promote their urge and yearning and to further raise the flames of anguish in them so that their impurities—the impurities of ego, power and status—are burnt. Ecstasy and absorption grow when the ego is lost. God is realised only in ecstasy. The longer one stays in ecstasy, the greater and more lasting is the bliss earned within. The greater the ecstasy, the greater is the quiescence attained. The process of hide-and-seek results in anguish, and anguish promotes the progress of a seeker, purifying his mind and removing all impurities in him. Hence, anguish is very essential.”

A devotee: “Sir, in this context, I am reminded of a few couplets by Shah Abdul Latif. These are:

At times the door is closed for me,
At times it is kept wide open,
At times I am not even called,
At times I am received with warmth and affection,
At times I keep waiting for a call,
At times secret messages are received,
Such is my supreme beloved.

And

Welcome my sweet beloved,
That was not right for you,
You made me mad,
Then withdrew,
May be you had no love for me,
Or had anger within,
Yet it was not right for you.

And

When did you learn, O my beloved,
The ways of the butcher?
Take a knife sharp enough,
Don't kill me with a blunt one.
Open my wounds and see,
I am deeply in anguish.

And

When I remember
My days with the beloved,
I heave deep sighs
Suddenly, unknowingly.”

Question: “Sir, does anguish come upon all lovers?”

Master: “None becomes a lover without anguish. The six qualities of a lover—pale appearance, cold sighs, tears, expectancy, restlessness and wandering (*rang zard, aah sard, chasm tar, intezari, beqarari, dar badar*)—do not develop in the absence of anguish. In this regard, Shah Abdul Latif has said:

What is attained in separation
Is not attained in meeting.
Having come to me
The beloved has pushed me away.

“Many fakirs have valued separation more than union with the beloved. Separation produces anguish and arouses emotions. No lover can reach his beloved in the absence of emotions. If there were no separation, the union would be of no value, nor would anguish arise. How can we ignore the things that lead us to the beloved? Lovers value these things immensely. They value separation more than the union. The bliss enjoyed by a lover in separation is not experienced in the union. Emotions, restlessness and yearning subside when one meets the beloved. Some lovers welcome separation and enjoy it much more. Seekers enjoy ecstasy in that state. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

I seek and search,
Let me not meet the beloved,

Let not the anguish within,
Vanish on our meeting.

And

Do not meet me
When I search for you,
Let not my craving
Vanish from my blood.

And

Grant me the prayer, O beloved,
Meet me not as I seek you,
Let not my longing for you vanish,
Meet me on the doomsday,
After I have spent my life in bliss.”

A devotee: “Sir, while speaking about love, you told us that love comes suddenly, and that it first arises in the beloved and is accompanied by suffering. But sir, you did not tell us about the state of a lover when love arises in him or when he is possessed with love. Kindly tell us about that also.”

Master: “Love is a divine fire. All the impurities within—lust, anger, avarice, attachment, ego—are burnt when the divine fire or *Brahm agni* arises. What remains thereafter is Allah, the beloved. At that stage, the lover is so much absorbed in the image of the beloved that he perceives nothing but the image of the beloved. Wherever he looks, he sees the beloved. His gaze is always fixed on the eyes of the beloved.”

Question: “Sir, what does a lover perceive in that vision (*deedar*)?”

Master: “I will quote a *shloka* by Swami Sahib¹:

When the four eyes meet,
Swami realises the Self.

The eyes must be four—two of the lover and two of the beloved. Eyes are of immense significance, (*addressing a singer*) Please sing the song: The secret of the Beauty is the mystery in the eyes.”

Singer: The secret of the Beauty
Is the mystery in the eyes.
The entire vision is enchanting,
God permeates everybody.
See the ways of love;
It sacrifices everything,
And loses the self
In the vision of the beloved.
Peeping within,
I realised the Truth,
Understood the manifest and the Absolute,
The same light is everywhere.
It has assumed multiplicity
For the sake of seekers,
Millions of *lahootis*²
Sport in His field.
It is Absolute only, O Daryakhan³,
Love is the prescription of the wise,
They alone can be in love,
Who have knowledge⁴ within.

1 name of a renowned saint in Sind

2 those who have attained the state of *lahoot* or *turiya*

3 name of the poet

4 *marfat*, *gyan*

Question: “Sir, what is it that arrests the seeker or takes possession of him when he fixes his gaze on the eyes of the beloved?”

Master: “It is the beauty or the glamour of the beloved. It is the beauty of the Truth (*Haq*), perceiving which the lover enjoys the bliss. He wants to enjoy it all the while and does not want to leave it at all. He, therefore, maintains his gaze there. That beauty and the bliss are beyond description.”

Question: “Sir, what does that indicate?”

Master: “It indicates that where there is Truth (*Haq*), there is Love (*Ishq*) and Beauty (*Husn*), and where there is Beauty, there is Bliss also. All these three qualities are the attributes of the Absolute (*Haq*, Allah). Where one of them is present, the other two are also there.”

Question: “Sir, could you kindly tell it more clearly?”

Master: “Why does a beautiful thing attract us when we see it? What is that attraction? It is love. Attraction is the function of love. After seeing a beautiful thing, or after being attracted by it, why do we wish to see it again and again? It is because it arouses bliss within. It shows that there is bliss in beauty. Love (*Ishq*), beauty (*husn*) and bliss (*lutf*, *ananda*) are interrelated. So it has been said in scriptures that Brahm (The Absolute) is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or God is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss; God is Truth-Love-Beauty. A lover enjoys so much bliss in that beauty that all the material comforts of the world become insignificant in comparison with that; they appear insipid or trifles to him.

“He forgoes all the material pleasures for the sake of the bliss. He sacrifices his self, body and mind for the beloved. He is so much absorbed in the bliss that he does not want to forget his beloved even for a moment. He has his gaze (concentration) constantly fixed on Him. Forgetfulness or separation even for a moment is like death to him. Sometime ago while reading the life of Hazrat Kwaja of Ajmer Shareef, we read about a fakir whose gaze was constantly fixed on the eyes of the beloved. Once his gaze accidentally shifted from there for a while and he looked at something else. He was then reprimanded from within as something else had appeared attractive to him because of which he had forgotten the beloved for a while. He felt extremely sorry and wept and repented. He prayed to the Lord that the eyes that had erred might be taken away from him so that he might not repeat the mistake. His prayer was granted by the Lord and he turned blind instantly.”

Question: “Sir, does a lover have the sense of good and evil when he attains the height of love? Does he perceive virtue and vice in others?”

Master: “How can a lover see these things? His concentration is always on the beloved and not on anything else. Whose virtue or vice should he see? Of the beloved? How can he do that? The beloved is extremely dear to him.

“A lover may have a multitude of objects before him. But when asked what he sees, he says that he sees nothing but the beloved. He has no mind for anything else. He is always absorbed in the beloved. He could see others

only if he shifted his gaze (or concentration) from the beloved.”

Question: “Sir, what good qualities arise in a lover when he comes out of the fire of love, fully baked?”

Master: “Innumerable qualities arise in him. He becomes the repository of many good qualities. It is difficult to describe all of them. Only a few may be enumerated here.

“Lovers always sacrifice themselves for others. They cannot bear the sufferings of others. They would themselves bear pain for the pleasures of others.

“Humility is the other attribute of lovers. They are humble before everybody. They are gentle and sweet in speech and do not hurt anybody.

“Lovers excel in patience and fortitude. One can learn about these qualities from them. They cherish ridicule and dishonour. They deliberately invite criticism and ridicule so that people may remain away from them and they get solitude and remain ever absorbed in the beloved.

“I know of a fakir in Hyderabad (Sind) who had kept a dog at the entrance of his house to scare away the folk. Anyone who approached him was attacked by the dog and if somehow he crossed it and entered the fakir’s house, he received words of abuse from his wife. Thus, lovers are indifferent to disrepute.

“I will tell you about another fakir. His wife was haughty and quarrelsome. She used to ill-treat him. The fakir would leave his house early in the morning and go to a forest to spend the day in meditation. In the evening, he would return home with a bundle of firewood on the back of a lion. One day, someone asked him, ‘Sir, you are a great saint with such powers that you can tame a lion. Why then are you scared of the utterances of your wife and remain away in the forest for the whole day?’ The fakir replied, ‘My powers are so much due to the ill temper of my wife that I am able to tame a lion. Those who can keep lions are not afraid of the howlings of jackals (*referring to his wife*).’

“Perseverence and fortitude of this kind arise only when there is love within. Once love arises, then things considered impossible can happen.”

Looking at the clock, the Master said that it was time for lunch, so the participants should take lunch in batches while devotional singing continued.

The following song was then sung:

Satguru has given the cup of love,

And I am inebriated with it.
Satguru serves the cup of love,
And demands the head as its price.
Drinking the cup I forget everything,
The mirror of my mind is cleansed.
I remain excited all the day,
I have attained the red hue,
My inebriation does not disappear,
I remain ever absorbed.
Primacy of love is beyond description,
It illumines the heart,
The flame gives divine hue,
And all illusions are lost.
Love has brought me this status,
I am beyond birth and death,
My attachments are lost, O Murad¹,
I have attained immortality.

¹ name of the poet

Then I went to the hut and sat by the side of an elderly devotee. Seeing me, he said: “Hearing that song, I am reminded of a couplet by a fakir. It says:

If someone asks
What did you see in love?
I say, O ignorant,
I have seen God, I have seen God.
(*Koi poochhe ki ishq men kya dekha,*
Bataya e ghafil, Khuda dekha, Khuda dekha).

“It is Holi today. On this day, Lord Krishna used to play with *gopis* in Brindaban. Apparently, he threw red and saffron colour on them, but in effect he coloured them in love. The anniversary, too, is celebrated here on Holi. Could it be that on this auspicious day the Master latently bestows his grace upon the *sangat* (associates)? Today, nothing but love was talked about. Possibly the gift of love has been bestowed today by Lord Krishna on some

lucky ones and love has arisen in their hearts. A fakir can do anything if he so pleases. There can be no limit to his grace and generosity. Guru and God are one (*Guru aur Gobind, dono ek hai*). What God can do, a fakir, too, can.”

The elderly devotee became quiet. While we were sitting quietly, we saw the Master approaching us. He was supervising the arrangement for food, etc. Coming near us, he said, “What are you thinking about? One should not think of useless things. One’s contemplation should be, *I am Yours, You are mine*. A jiva will attain everything by this.” Saying so, he went ahead.

MEETING 27

LOVE 6

Love and Intellect

(Ishq aur Aqal)

SHANTI NAGAR 31 March, 1956

The subject of love was discussed at length on the occasion of the anniversary celebrations a few days ago. Somehow I still had a few questions unanswered in my mind. When I arrived here this morning, I found the Master in the company of a few devotees. No one was talking. Seizing the opportunity I put a question to him.

Question: “Sir, what is the disposition of a lover, in comparison with that of the folk, when love arises and settles down in his heart?”

Master: “At that time the disposition of the lover is different from that of the folk. He becomes helpless. Nothing remains within his powers. He comes under the control of someone else. Love dominates and rules in his case.”

Question: “Sir, in what way is his disposition different from that of others?”

Master: “Earlier his conduct and behaviour were guided by intellect (reasoning). Now he goes beyond the realm of intellect.”

Question: “Sir, can it be said that in that case intellect (reasoning) becomes ineffective or non-operative?”

Master: “That is right. Love and intellect are contradictory; they are poles apart. Love is God—perfect light and perfect knowledge—whereas intellect is mundane cognition. How can it stand in comparison with love? There is a vast difference between the two.

“Persons dominated by intellect are always calculative. They continually weigh pros and cons, and are concerned about gain and loss. Lovers are indifferent to these things. They do not remain quiet when they find love; they just take a leap forward having no consideration of gain and loss at all.

“Love and intellect are opposed to each other in many ways. People with intellect are overtly neat and tidy. They care for ostentation, and also for the opinion of others. Lovers are indifferent to dress and physical appearance. Public esteem and public opinion are unimportant and of no relevance to

them. They do not know what honour and dishonour are.

“The people guided by intellect are bound within the sphere of honour and prestige. They are pleased with appreciation by others, whereas lovers are indifferent to that and their concentration is only on one thing: the pleasure of the beloved. They are indifferent to public criticism. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Lovers seek the cup of poison,
They are in search of suffering.

The lovers are pleased with suffering. They ask for suffering. As Shah Abdul Latif has further said:

Give me the gift of suffering,
Give me suffering in dowry.

“Can people with intellect do that? The people dominated by intellect always avoid suffering and seek comforts and pleasures of the world. Lovers discard these things. They seek suffering only. They do not care for their heads. Like moths, they are ever ready to jump into a flame. The beloved (satguru) is the flame. They are willing to sacrifice everything to realise the beloved if their sacrifices are accepted.

“Here, I am reminded of a story. Once a woman went to a saint to seek his blessings for a son. Fixing his concentration, the saint found that according to her destiny she would not have a son for the next seven generations. The woman returned home greatly disappointed. After a few days, however, she went to another fakir, who was always in ecstasy and lived outside the town. He was an ecstatic fakir. When the woman put her request to him, he being in ecstasy blessed her that she would have seven sons. The woman did get seven sons. When the saint, whom the woman had first approached, came to know about it, he was astonished at it. He complained to the Lord how that woman could have seven sons when she was destined to have none. The Lord told him that he would soon get the reply.

“After a few days, God appeared there as an old man shouting very loudly, ‘It there anybody dear to God who would give me his head?’ Everyone who heard him laughed at him and ignored him. The saint who had complained to the Lord also heard this call and he, too, ignored him. The old man went out of the town and gave the same call and the ecstatic fakir heard it somewhat

faintly at a distance. But such persons are ever alert in these matters. He instantly called the old man and asked him what he wanted. Hearing his demand, the ecstatic fakir said, 'I am ready to sacrifice anything for the Lord. But I am sorry that I have only one head to offer. I wish I had a million heads to offer and then, too, it would be His grace if He accepted them.' Saying so, he cut off his head before the old man. The old man took the head to the saint who had complained to the Lord. Placing it before him, He appeared before him in His true form and said, 'Those who are immersed in love are competent to do anything. I am subordinate to them'."

Question: "Sir, both the saints were devotees. What was the difference between the two?"

Master: "Fakirs or saints are of two kinds: *zahid* (ritualistic) and *ashiq* (lovers). Both are engaged in endeavours. The *zahid* (ritualistic) fakirs are calculative. The status of lovers (*ashiq*) is supreme and beyond description. The efforts (*bhakti*) of the saint of the first category were guided by his intellect, and the flames of love had not yet arisen in him. The other fakir was a lover (*ashiq*). He had surrendered his head and heart to the Lord. The heart should not have a place in it for anything except the Lord. While granting birth to a jiva, the Lord tells him, 'O jiva, I am granting you a precious thing—the heart. Hold it in trust for me. See that you do not allow a place in it to anything except Me. That is My seat.' Should we then be guilty of a breach of trust with God? Should we fill our hearts with evil? Where then will He find a place for Himself? He will go back. How can a jiva progress in that case?"

Question: "Sir, intellect moves the world. Industries, railways, aeroplanes, etc are the creations of the intellect. How can we underrate intellect?"

Master: "In the mundane sense, we cannot ignore intellect. It does perform mundane functions, and runs factories, industries, etc. But it operates within certain limits. It does not lead us on the divine path. Fakirs say that God is infinite intellect (*kul aqal*), and man has finite intellect (*juz aqal*). How can finite intelligence lead to infinite intelligence? What is its utility if it cannot do that? A jiva assumes birth on this planet, earth, to realise the Self, and not for any other purpose. Why should one give so much importance to finite intelligence? How can we equate mundane purposes with the divine? There is a vast difference between the two. All right, let us look for a while at the mundane activities of those who first realised God and then participated in mundane activities—King Janaka, Sri Ramchandra, the ten Gurus, other

saints and sages. They had been perfect in their actions and dealings. Can you compare their functioning with the functioning of those who have lived only at the mundane level? Certainly, you cannot compare intellectuals with lovers. The lovers (*ashiq*) are adept in fortitude. They see good in everything and readily assimilate good from wherever it comes. They are always humble and helpful. Do intellectuals have these qualities? Lovers traverse the path of subtlety; intellectuals the path of the gross. Lovers seek immortality; intellectuals seek the transient and the perishable and they wander in the cycle of rebirths. Such are the differences between the two.”

Question: “Sir, what you say about intellect is all right. But Swami Sahib¹ has said:

¹ name of a saint in Sind

Love and intellect are the two wings of a bird,
Taking it into the experiential *akash*,
They help in absorption in the divine.

He has equated love with intellect. How is that?”

Master: “What Swami Sahib has said is correct. He has not used the word ‘intellect’ with the same connotation, as it is ordinarily done. Here it connotes pure cognition or gyan. Truly, bhakti (love) and gyan (knowledge) are the two wings with which the bird—the jiva—can fly and attain absorption in the *shabd* granted by the guru.”

Question: “Sir, when does a jiva come under the influence of intellect?”

Master: “When he is deprived of love. Intellect (reasoning) comes in when love goes out. Likewise, when love enters, intellect withdraws. The two are opposed to each other and cannot coexist.”

The Master then asked the singers to sing. They sang:

Love comes in the path of intellect,
I have turned away from intellect.
My murshid has served me
The cup full of nectar.
The valiant love wins the battle
Between love and intellect.

The waves rising in the ocean of grace
Have drowned the devil of ego.
Love is powerful, O Qutab¹;
It ignores the forces of intellect.

And

Love permits no rest;
It teaches the lesson of sufferings.
Intellect retreats
Where love enters.
Love leads the prayers;
It teaches things beyond religion.
Love seeks no subordination;
It turns princes into paupers.
Love brings ill repute;
It gives bad name all over.
Love knows not dogmas and rituals;
It is unconcerned about religion.
It knows not religion or agnosticism,
And puzzles the learned priests.
When love comes to Ahasan²,
Anguish within is enhanced.
All is in vain without love,
None realises the truth without love;

1 the Revered Master, Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah

2 name of the poet

After the music was over, the Master said *Hari Om* to us and went into the residential barrack.

We were about six persons left in the hall. As we were discussing among ourselves, one of my elderly friends said, "I am reminded of an episode that clearly illustrates the difference between intellect and love. Since the episode is about one of our co-disciples, I have some hesitation in talking about it." But we insisted and impressed upon him that since we were co-disciples and

if an incident about anyone of us helped in improving our understanding and helped us avoid pitfalls we should not feel bad about it. He then told us the episode.

Elderly devotee: “This episode is related to one of our co-disciples, X, and it happened some years ago while we were in Sind. By the grace of satguru, when love first appeared in X (though in a very mild form, like a little grain), he (X) became extremely restless. One day he felt an irresistible urge to see the satguru (the Master). He was staying at a place about 70-80 miles away from where his satguru lived. Taking a like-minded companion with him, he started on foot to meet the satguru. They walked for two nights and two days, without taking any food on the way, and arrived at Rohri. X’s shoes got torn on the way and he walked bare-foot, but he took no notice of that. The Master was very pleased to see him. He dressed his feet, served him with food and made him take some rest. The next day X went back with his companion. His mind was fixed on nothing but the beloved.

“A few years after this incident, X came to Karachi to live there. Having resigned his post in a Government Department, he started his business and it flourished. He developed love for money. You know very well the temptation of wealth. One is never satisfied, the thirst is never quenched. So it happened with him, too. Taking pity on X, the benign Master called another devotee, Y, and said to him, ‘I feel sorry that a fine seeker like X should have gone down like that. It seems that he needs money, that is why he is behaving like that. Please go to him and enquire how much money he needs and whether he will spend the remaining three weeks in meditation if God grants him in the first week every month the money he needs.’ Y went to X and conveyed to him the message of the Master. X agreed to the Master’s proposal. I am not able to recall exactly, perhaps he proposed Rs. 2,000 or 3,000¹ every month. He promised that in case he got that amount in the first week, he would spend the remaining part of the month in meditation. When the Master got this report, he said, ‘X has put a heavy demand. It seems that he is trying to be clever, but that does not matter. It is accepted by Allah and he will get the amount in the first week every month, but he must stick to his promise.’ Y went to X and conveyed to him the Master’s reply.

¹ It was considered a very big sum in those days.

“Things happened accordingly. X got the specified amount in the first week. In the second and the third months also he got money in the like manner. After three months, the Master asked Y to go to X to find out whether X was using his time properly. X said to Y, ‘One cannot earn sitting quietly at home. One has to go to the market every day, meet the people and maintain contacts. If you forget your business, the business will forget you. Business is not a joke, one cannot earn sitting at home!’ X had not kept his promise. Y reported back to the Master. The Master kept quiet. The earnings of X declined in the subsequent month. What he had previously got in the first week, he could not earn even that much in spite of intense efforts for the whole month. He got badly entangled in his work and forgot the Lord. He did accumulate a little wealth. Then came the partition of the country and everything was lost. Now when I look at his earlier state and also the state at present, I get puzzled. See the vast difference in the two states—first when he was under the influence of love and later when he came under the influence of intellect.”

Someone in the group asked him a question.

Question: “It is said that a seeker seasoned in love is not easily misled. How did it happen in the case of X?”

Elderly devotee: “X had just tasted only a grain of love which is given by a satguru to inspire and arouse a devotee. The state of love is something still ahead. It is a great thing that is earned after prolonged endeavour.”

Then came the call for lunch and we dispersed.

MEETING 28

LOVE 7

To Maintain Love

SHANTI NAGAR 22 October, 1956

I was late in arriving here because the train by which I was travelling was running late. Satsang was in progress when I entered the hall. The reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha was in progress. After the reading was over, the Master addressed the gathering.

Master: “We shall have devotional music. Recently, we had been to Adipur. A girl accompanying us had learnt some new lyrics there. One of these has been composed by a lady devotee of Jhok Shareef¹. She sings in a style characteristic of Jhok Shareef. The lyric is plaintive and the tune is very touching. Hope you will like it. We shall now request her to sing.”

¹ a famous Sufi dargah in Sind

Lady devotee: How shall I earn thy grace,
That is my anxiety.
How shall our bond be sustained,
That is my anxiety.
I have no wisdom,
Nor energy and vigour,
Nor have I manners,
Nor intelligence and understanding.
Your path is slippery,
How shall I stay there?
My body is sickly,
My mind passionate and unstable,

Hold fast my hand,
I am sunk in illusions.
My love has faded,
Dispassion has disappeared,
I take a step forward,
And slip many steps behind.
How shall I seek my goal?
I am caught in pleasures.
How to save myself?
I am Thy slave,
Thy grace shall save me.

A devotee: “Sir, the lyric says:

How shall our bond be sustained,
That is my anxiety.

Do all seekers have that kind of anxiety?”

Master: “Whether all seekers have that kind of anxiety, let everyone ask himself. He who claims to be a seeker must be concerned about his bond of love being sustained. He must understand that if fortunately he has a satguru, he must fully avail himself of the opportunity. Possibly an opportunity like that might not come again; therefore, it is essential that the bond of love be sustained.

“If the initial emotional enthusiasm is continuously maintained, that would be something really marvellous. The world is subject to change. Different forces dominate at different times. A jiva keeps moving between *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is not certain that the love would be sustained all the time. Therefore, one must always pray to the Lord: May the bond with You be everlasting.”

Question: “Sir, must a seeker have this anxiety only initially, or at all times?”

Master: “The spiritual path is extremely slippery at the higher stages. The higher the state of subtlety, the greater is the risk of a slip. A seeker has to face the caprice or periodical fancies of the Lord. Therefore, a jiva should be concerned about his bond with the Lord. He must do penitence (*tobah, tobah*)

and keep yearning. That is the only way to sustain the bond with the beloved. As a jiva advances in subtlety, he feels more concerned about the maintenance of the bond because the tests become increasingly difficult. Ego is highly subtle. When it arises, it causes a great harm. Fakirs are extremely scared of it; therefore, they are always worried about their bond being ever sustained.”

Question: “Sir, what should a seeker do so that his bond is ever sustained?”

Master: “A seeker must maintain fear and love within. At the same time, he must shed tears and practise penitence and be always anxious to sustain his bond with the beloved. It must not be casual weeping; it must be persistent. As Saint Dadu has said:

You must weep day and night,
Not for a minute or for a while.
I continued to weep, O Dadu,
And found the beloved within.

It should not be sporadic or momentary weeping; it should be incessant weeping for all the twenty-four hours of the day. Those who have shed incessant tears, have also observed penitence so that their bond is maintained. Besides, a jiva must also maintain secrecy. It is absolutely essential. One must not expose oneself.”

Question: “Sir, all fakirs have not maintained secrecy. Some like Bekas have openly proclaimed that they have realised God.”

Master: “The Revered Master used to say that Bekas was an excellent fakir but because he exposed himself he had to pay a price for that. He died at an early age. Had he lived for some more time, he would have realised his mistake. Mansoor, too, was a fakir of a high status. But because he exposed himself and proclaimed *Ana-al-Haq*, the Revered Master did not give him much credit. Those who have crossed these stages, have confirmed that it is a sign of immaturity to expose oneself.”

An elderly devotee: “Sir, you are right. Sufi fakirs have said that Mansoor was a king among fakirs, but a nude king. He exposed his love. (He proclaimed, ‘I am God’.) He did not put on the stately garb of secrecy. Had he done that, he would have enjoyed a superior status, and would have been saved from the gallows.”

Master: “Yes. As the seeker exists in the frame of five elements and lives in

the ephemeral world (*mrityu lok*), he must overtly maintain the spirit of humility and subordination in order that his love within remains concealed, no matter what distance he has traversed on the spiritual path and what state he has attained. As long as a jiva is in the ephemeral world, he must abide by its rules, or else he must face a penalty. The Revered Master used to say, ‘Howsoever high might be your divine status, if you maintain humility, you remain safe.’

“Seekers in the past had maintained so much secrecy about themselves that it is difficult to describe it. There lived a Sikh. He was extremely contented and had totally resigned himself to the will of the Lord. He had a premonition that his son would die on the night of his marriage. But he did not reveal it to others. On the wedding day when the marriage party left the home, the Sikh stayed back on the pretext that he would come later along with the guests who might arrive late. His son-in-law arrived late. As he entered the house, he was astonished to see his father-in-law preparing a bier. The father-in-law calmly explained to him that that was the will of the Lord and that was how the things had been ordained. The boy would breathe his last as soon as the marriage ceremony was over. He told his son-in-law to keep that a secret and bring the family back home with courage. The son-in-law was puzzled but he agreed to obey his father-in-law. Things happened as were ordained. The boy left his mortal frame. The son-in-law appreciated that his father-in-law was in peace even in the most grave circumstances. People in the past had resigned themselves to the will of the Lord. But who were those people? They had the fire of love within and were contented with the will of God and did not utter a word about themselves. They held the fire within and maintained absolute silence.

“A jiva must observe certain conditions while yearning; only then his bond will remain unbroken. It is a great virtue to sustain the bond of love.”

Question: “Sir, what is more difficult, to fall in love or to sustain love?”

Master: “It is easy to fall in love but it is Very difficult to sustain love.”

Question: “Sir, is it necessary for those who are possessed with love to adopt necessary measures for their bond to remain unbroken?”

Master: “Those who are possessed with love are not misled. Their pattern of living so changes that they become repositories of all virtues.”

Elderly devotee: “Sir, a fakir has said:

He does not lose the path,

Who is possessed with love.

Sachal Fakir has said:

All animals disappear,
When the lion appears in the forest.
Love (*ishq*) is the lion; anger, avarice,
Passion and ego are the other animals.”

Master: “Yes, such seekers are not misled and they remain free from various faults (*vikar*). Yet, as long as one lives in the world and bears a body of five elements and remains among those who have dualistic attitude, one must follow the safe path as has been suggested by the Revered Master. He says that a jiva must follow humility and subordination.”

As there were no more questions, the Master asked a singer to sing. The song that was selected was:

May our bond of love
Be sustained forever.
What do I know of love
And of the force of anguish?
Let not my mind think else,
But always cherish you.
May you be always with me,
I shed profuse tears for you.
Sachal¹ has surrendered to you,
You are the benign master.”

¹ name of the poet

Then the concluding hymn was recited. That marked the end of satsang. Taking leave of the Master, I left for Bombay along with an old devotee of the Master who lived in another State and had come to stay with the Master for a few days. Referring to the theme of the discussion in the satsang, he said, “The topic that was discussed this afternoon is of special interest to the Master. He himself is an example of sustained love; one has to learn from

him how one can maintain love with others. Very few can match him in this regard. He has fully maintained his bond with all—his satguru, his *sangat* (circle) and his relatives. He does good to all who come in contact with him, no matter how they behave with him. Though people get annoyed with him for no reason or on petty matters, yet the Master does not mind anything and shows affection to them in no small measure. In some cases even though some of his associates were annoyed, he remained by their bedside at the time of their death, totally disregarding what they had done to him. The presence of a saint of the rank of the Master by the bedside at the time of death must be a matter of immense grace to those who had been previously annoyed with him.

“One has to learn from the Master how to maintain the relations and the bond with one’s satguru. A seeker is required to be within proper limits of obedience and reverence. But some seekers disregarded these limits and took undue liberties with him. Normally a seeker would incur wrath of his satguru for such sinful acts, but the benign Master overlooked all the faults of his devotees and showed affection to them in such a great measure that they subsequently felt ashamed of their acts.

“The Master not only helps his associates in mundane matters, but renders to them immense support and help in their spiritual progress and bestows grace upon them which can hardly be described. At no stage has he denied his love to a seeker. One has to learn from him how to sustain the bond of love. He is love personified, love that is unshakable and unchangeable.”

MEETING 29

NOT TO FIND FAULTS WITH NOR SPEAK ILL OF OTHERS

BOMBAY 28 June, 1956

The Master had come to Bombay and stayed with a devotee for three days. While he and his party were about to leave for Shanti Nagar very early in the morning, a devotee arrived there. He paid obeisance to the Master. The Master greeted him and said, "Where have you been all these days? I have long been expecting you. I am glad to see you. You are welcome. (*addressing the host*) Please get him a cup of tea."

The devotee had been visiting the Master very frequently until some time back. He was very fond of serving others and had also served the Master intently. Of late, however, he did not come to the Master frequently owing to the ups and downs of life. After he had finished his tea, the Master spoke to him again.

Master: "What about your family? How is your uncle?"

Devotee: "Sir, all is well by your grace. Presently, my relations with my uncle are strained and I do not see him."

Master: "How is it? What has happened? Earlier, you had very good relations with him and you treated him as the head of your family, even though you had your separate establishment."

Devotee: "Sir, he has many evils and, therefore, I do not like him any more."

Master: "How is it, you did not notice the faults earlier but see them now?"

Devotee: "Sir, all relatives are fair weather friends. No one is of any help in the hour of need."

Master: "Do you mean mundane needs? If one looks up to wealthy people for help in mundane needs, one will face disappointment. One must pin all one's hopes only on the Lord. It is futile to look up to the wealthy or worldly people for help. Yet, it is not right to bear animosity against or find faults with those whom we had once loved, no matter if they subsequently disappointed us. We have to live in the world and have to spend the life among friends and relatives. How long and in how many cases shall we go about finding faults and breaking the bonds?"

Devotee: "Sir, it is difficult to close one's eyes to the faults as long as these

are conspicuous. Let my uncle first improve himself and then the earlier relations can be restored.”

Master: “It is not correct to think that one will have a relationship with a person only after virtues manifest in him. Better it would be if one develops such qualities within oneself that one does not see evil among others. Such are the commands of the fakirs.”

Devotee: “Sir, what are those attributes?”

Master: “He was your uncle earlier and he is your uncle even now. You did not see faults in him earlier but you see now. It indicates a decline in your love now. If one maintains an attitude of love and regards such people as dear to oneself, that would be an excellent attainment. Then one does not see faults in others. This is a saintly prescription for life.”

Devotee (*heaving a sigh*): “Sir, I am really sorry to say that though I have spent my life with saints, I have failed to develop these attributes in myself. I do not know when I shall develop these.”

Master: “It is not a thing that can be attained in a single birth. Nevertheless, you must be complimented on realising your failings. That, too, is a great thing. A jiva is supposed to have attained a lot if instead of seeing faults in others he looks at his own failings.”

The host announced the arrival of the taxi and proposed that we might leave. The Master invited that devotee to accompany him to Shanti Nagar, but he regretted saying that he had some other commitments. We came to Bombay V.T., took the 5 o’clock train for Kalyan and arrived at Shanti Nagar.

It was 7:30 a.m. Patients had started coming in. The Master attended to them and also saw the mail of the past three days. In between, he glanced through the morning newspaper. He took a very light breakfast. Soon, a man entered the hall. The Master went forward to receive him, greeted him and offered him a seat. The visitor started talking of gyan, and extensively quoted from the Vedas, the Upanishads, Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, etc. He also quoted from the lyrics of saints. The Master listened to him with great attention. The visitor talked for about three-quarters of an hour, then got a medicine from the Master and left.

A devotee: “Sir, who was this person? It seems he knows a lot.”

Master: “He hails from my native place. Whenever he comes, he entertains us very well.”

Another devotee: “Sir, I know him very well. He is such a great and

what he does is May God save us from such persons! Recently also . . .
.”

Master: (*interrupting him by raising his hand*): “Leave it. May God bless him!”

The Master became quiet and others, too, remained silent. When the atmosphere was relaxed after a short while, someone put him a question.

Question: “Sir, kindly forgive me. For a long time, my mind has been bothered with a question. Many jivas coming here have numerous faults and failings. Knowing full well their faults, you do not reprimand them or tell them anything. Instead, you show them greater love. Why is it so? Is that correct?”

Everyone present was taken aback by this question, as if something unusual had happened. Tears came instantly to the eyes of the Master. He spoke in a very solemn tone.

Master: “May God forgive us! May He not make us see faults in others!”

As he spoke, tears rolled down his cheeks. He picked a napkin and wiped his tears. Rarely had he allowed tears to flow down his eyes. He always kept his feelings to himself. The fact that he could not control his tears today indicated how strongly he disliked finding faults in others or speaking ill of others. He spoke again.

Master: “The Revered Master did not find fault in anybody. He did not love anybody in a small measure. How, then, can I do otherwise? May God forgive us! May He bless everybody!”

The words arose from the core of his heart and everybody was deeply touched. Everyone present there started searching within himself. What we considered fun and a matter of pride, the Master considered that a great sin. We have a feeling of greatness or elation when we find faults in others. We consider it an act of generosity and open-mindedness to expose others’ faults and talk about them. It has been rightly said that debased intelligence means wrong judgment. That has been the case with us. Now we realised our mistakes and felt sorry for what we had been doing.

There was complete silence in the hall for about fifteen minutes. The Master appeared deeply absorbed in thoughts. Heaving a deep sigh, he spoke again.

Master: “The Revered Master used to say that one must neither see faults in others, nor hear ill of others. Making a humble submission to him, I had once said to him, ‘Sir, one might not speak ill of others, but what should we do if

someone else talked ill of others?’ He said, ‘One must quietly withdraw from there.’ These were his instructions. I had not spoken to the Revered Master all the life for more than two or three times and this was one.”

Question: “Sir, if we have the old habit of finding faults in others and speaking ill of others...”

Master: “Fakirs neither find faults in others, nor do they speak ill of others. They are always engaged with the beloved. When do they have the time to see the failings of others? Let a jiva once attain absorption in the beloved, he then becomes free from everything else.”

Question: “Sir, let us forget for a while how the ordinary people function. We find that even some of those on the spiritual path are also victims of this disease. What happens to such people?”

Master: “May God bless them, too! May He grant them wisdom and right judgment! When they receive your good wishes, they will certainly be benefited.”

It was 11 o’clock. I and some other devotees went into the hut to have a rest. When we returned to the hall after about an hour, we found the Master attending to the mail that had just arrived. He opened a letter written by A, one of his old associates, in which he had complained about B, another devotee of the Master. Probably A and B had a dispute over property and B’s wife had used some derogatory words against A. A had also written, “Sir, you have thrown us into the jungle so much so that my friends call me by such bad names as ruinous, etc.” Hearing the contents of the letter, the Master became quiet and grave. Putting aside all other letters, he decided to send a reply to this letter and asked a lady devotee to take dictation. After preliminary greetings, the Master further dictated:

“Let us see what the word RUINOUS indicates in the *child’s language*. It says: (S) surrender yourself to the satguru, and (R, U) realise your true self. But how? Through (N) navel so that your (I) ego is (O) ousted or annihilated.” Now, let us see what the word JUNGLE indicates. (U) you reduce yourself to (N) naught and become a non-entity. Your (E) eyes must shed tears and you must be absorbed in (J) *japa* and yearning so that (L) love for (G) God arises in you.

“Please tell now what is wrong with these words? We have forgotten our duties and tasks and so we see evil in others. It is not otherwise possible for anyone to show anger at a person devoted to God. May God bless you!”

Thus the Master concluded the letter.

Sitting at a short distance I was listening to everything with rapt attention. I was expecting that the Master would reprimand B. What he had dictated in his reply to A's letter came as a pleasant surprise to me. Only saints of high order, like the Master, could choose that course. The Master followed the path of self-annihilation, reducing himself to naught and seeing nothing but the Lord. In his reply he had stressed the point that to sustain the relationship of love one has to practise self-sacrifice. The lady, who took the dictation, spoke.

Lady devotee: "Sir, this is a wonderful reply. I had thought that you would show sympathy to A and reprimand B for his wife having used bad language."

Master: "That was the right answer. Jivas are unnecessarily wasting their time. A jiva should ask himself what he had learnt from prolonged satsang. We should train our thoughts in such a manner that when someone speaks ill, we do not see evil, rather see virtue in that."

Lady devotee: "Sir, you have said in the letter that one can realise God by surrendering oneself to satguru. As regards the method, you have suggested that the ego might be annihilated through the navel. Kindly elaborate the point."

Master: "This, too, is a kind of practice that preceptors suggest to seekers; ego is annihilated with it. When the seeker is firm in his practice, love arises in him and he then sees nothing but the Lord. Then he does not see any evil. O jiva, do not hate anybody, do not blame anybody and do not find fault with others. If you do, you cannot enjoy the divine bliss. A jiva attains quiescence when he does not find fault with others. A jiva should not see fault in others, should not speak ill of others, and should not hear ill of others."

Lady devotee: "Sir, it shows that unless a jiva abandons the attitude of fault-finding, he cannot enjoy the divine bliss, no matter whether he counts his beads and observes other austerities intensely and meticulously."

Master: "How can one see purity if one is given to seeing impurities? God is supremely pure."

Presently, four persons who were well-known social workers in the area entered the hall. They had a copy of a local newspaper with them. After paying obeisance to the Master, they told him that they wanted to have a confidential talk with him. The Master went with them into the hut below. We went for lunch and thereafter we had siesta.

We assembled for the satsang at 4:00 p.m. as usual.

Master: “Today some persons came to meet me. They gave me a copy of the local newspaper—Ramrajya—published from Kalyan and drew my attention to an item in it. It was a letter to the editor complaining about a sadhu and some others in a village. They wanted my assistance in the matter. Would you like the letter to be read out? But this can be done on the condition that all of us will sincerely send them our good wishes so that they are helped and the evil changes into good. If we do that with sympathy in our hearts, some good will certainly come out. It requires a powerful mind and disposition to see good in evil. You have heard about Majnu. He loved Laila. Though Laila had a dark complexion, yet Majnu was mad after her, because what he saw in Laila was exclusive to him. That kind of perception is needed. Do you all agree to this condition?”

Nobody in the gathering dared say anything. The newspaper was kept aside. Satsang started as usual. After the reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha was over, two devotional songs of Sant Kabir were sung by a singer. These were:

God first created the Light,
All are creatures of nature,
The universe is created from one light;
Who is good, who is bad?
Do not be under illusion,
God pervades the creation,
The creation exists in God,
He permeates everything.
It is only the same clay,
Assuming diverse forms,
The Creator creates.
Nothing is bad with clay pots,
Nor with the Potter;
He alone is truth in everything,
Things happen as He ordains.
Only he is truly a man
Who understands the command,
And the Universal Truth, too.
To describe God is not possible,
But my satguru has given me the sweet secret,

My illusion is lifted,
And I have vision of the Pure Being.

And

I am the worst among all, O Kabir,
All but me are virtuous,
He who accepts this
Is truly my friend.

Master: “Something wonderful has happened today. See the wonders of the Lord. The whole day he made us recapitulate a single theme: See no evil, speak no evil of anybody and hear no evil about anybody. This topic arose before us while we were leaving Bombay early in the morning and the same topic arose here again at the commencement of the satsang. The Lord wants us to remember this idea thoroughly well and accordingly these lyrics of Sant Kabir have come before us. Kabir Sahib says:

The universe is created from one light;
Who is good, who is bad?

But we act to the contrary and always find faults with others. A seeker must first ask himself whether he is free from faults, before he finds faults with others. Why should he consider anyone apart from the Lord, or from the Divine Light? Is it right to find faults with the Lord? Before thinking of reforming others, let a jiva ask himself if he is reforming himself.”

Question: “Sir, does a jiva harm himself when he finds faults in others?”

Master: “Fault-finding is like stirring the bottom of a water pot where mud has settled. The mud rises and makes the water dirty. Similarly, fault-finding makes the pot—the heart—dirty.”

An elderly devotee: “Sir, you speak right. As long as one speaks or hears ill of others, he sustains the image of the evil or of the dirt in his mind. His interior is polluted.”

Master: “Yes, that is right. Another implication of finding faults in others is that one assumes oneself superior to others. That is the subtle ego, and it is not good. It must be avoided. Discrimination (*vivek*) does not arise in a jiva so long as he is in the habit of fault finding. A jiva cannot progress in the absence of discrimination.”

Question: “Sir, to speak ill of a person amounts to sending ill wishes, instead of good wishes, to that person. If good wishes help the person to whom these are sent, as in the case of blessings, can it be assumed that ill wishes harm the person to whom these are directed.”

Master: “An ideation (sankalpa) arising in the mind certainly fructifies. A good sankalpa bears good results and a bad sankalpa bears bad results. This is the law of nature. A person who speaks ill of others entertains ill sankalpas or evil ideations in his mind and he gets the fruits thereof accordingly. At one stage or other, these ideations or sankalpas strike him very hard. Secondly, the vibrations or ideations spread in the cosmos, as the radio waves do, and the sender of the evil vibrations being himself, too, in the cosmos, is not spared from their evil influence. Another important point to consider is: who is the sender of the vibrations and to whom these evil ideas are directed; or in other words, what are the mental capabilities of the two parties? This point is of vital importance. If the person to whom the vibrations are directed is competent to reject the vibrations, the vibrations then boomerang upon the sender causing him great damage. The position is similar to what happens in the case of *mantras*. If the person to whom the *mantras* are directed is competent to reject them, then the *mantras* affect the sender.”

Question: “Sir, the persons who are capable of rejecting the vibrations must be the ones possessing very strong will power, such as fakirs, saints, etc.”

Master: “That is correct.”

Question: “Sir, we agree that it is very bad to speak ill of others. But we have heard that fakirs deliberately invite dishonour or defamation. How is it so?”

Master: “Yes, there are instances of fakirs inviting dishonour or defamation. There are instances where fakirs have paid money to get disrepute; they consider dishonour or disrepute a great merit and a powerful safety device.

“There was a fakir around whom people flocked in large numbers. They asked him for nothing but material comforts. Nobody would ask for spiritual uplift. He got so sick of them that one day he called a prostitute and took her with him through the bazaar. Carrying a bottle of wine in his hand, he took sips out of it and also asked her to do so. Everybody started speaking ill of him. People stopped flocking around him. Only the true seekers remained with him. Others left him.”

A devotee (a disciple of another saint): “Sir, my satguru used to narrate an episode. There once lived a dervish. He asked himself how he was and he got

the reply from within that he was going very strong. The dervish asked himself how he was going strong when he had starved himself and had given up sleep. Promptly came the reply that despite all that, he was getting his food. The dervish asked what food he got? The reply came from within that wherever he went, people always bowed to him, respected him and called him a fakir, and that was his food. The dervish felt extremely sorry. He went to a prostitute in the town and sought her permission to spend a night at her place. The woman permitted him. The dervish spent the night in meditation. In the morning he offered some money to the woman but she refused to accept it saying that he was a fakir and had spent the night in meditation. She was a sinner and would not like to incur more sin by accepting money from a fakir. She asked him if she could serve him in any manner. The dervish asked her for a special favour. He told her to take off her ear-rings and put them in his pocket. He would run away and then she should cry ‘thief, thief’. First, the woman refused to do such a sinful act and begged to be excused, but when the dervish assured her that in case she obliged him, she would be blessed by the Lord, she agreed to his request and put her ear-rings in his pocket. The dervish dashed out of her house. She, too, ran after him crying ‘thief, thief’. People in the street stopped the dervish. They told the woman that it was a dervish and asked her why she was making false cries. The woman told the people that the man had spent the night with her and had stolen her ear-rings from under the pillow. She asked them to search his pockets. When his pockets were searched, the ear-rings were found. He was severely beaten by the people. The people who earlier called him a dervish and bowed to him and respected him, now mocked him. Next day he asked himself how he was. He got the reply that it was the remedy he needed.”

Another devotee: “Sir, Sai Hadi Baksh used to say that a jiva should not be afraid of dishonour. He should not be angry with those who spoke ill of him. Rather, he should think that they were removing the evils in him. They must be treated as friends. They caused him suffering, and suffering leads to love, and love unites us with the Lord. About praise, Sai Hadi Baksh used to say that one who is pleased with praise is supposed to have fallen in a ditch.”

Master: “That is correct. Fakirs invite ill fame when they find that they are being praised all over and that they are likely to be harmed by the praise. (*addressing a singer*) Please sing the song, ‘O! lover, do not do anything that brings you praise’.”

Singer: Don’t do anything, O lover,

That brings you praise.
Carry ill fame on your head,
And let the world mock at you.
Be notorious in love,
For nothing else helps.
Then the wave of love
Shall carry you on the crest.
As you take the path to the beloved,
You shall attain knowledge.
Take no other path, my dear,
Avoid the path of ego.
Tear up the veil and come out,
What prevents you?
You can't gain anything, O Sachal¹,
After your anguish is gone.

¹ name of the poet

Master: “The instructions of the sages are that one must not be scared of disrepute or dishonour. One should not send ill wishes to those who speak ill of him, rather one should send good wishes to them and pray to God to bless them.”

Question: “Sir, how is it that some fakirs curse others and send ill wishes to them?”

Master: “You are talking about fakirs. A fakir neither displeases nor hurts anyone. He neither curses anybody nor thinks ill of anybody, even if he is insulted or troubled. On his own, he does not punish anybody, though some others may do that for his sake because he has surrendered himself to some.

“Once while wandering in a town, a fakir sat down to have a rest in shade in front of a house and started smoking his tobacco pipe. Above him in the balcony was sitting a newly wedded young couple. The smoke from the pipe, as it rose above, caused irritation in the eyes of the girl. Annoyed at it, her husband rushed down, abused and beat the fakir and drove him away. The

fakir did not utter even a single word. He quietly left the place. While climbing the stairs, the man slipped on the steps, fell and got multiple fractures on both the legs. He was taken to a hospital where the doctors said that both his legs had to be amputated because there was no other treatment. A small incident turned into a catastrophe. The man realised that it was the result of the ill treatment he had meted out to the fakir. He searched for the fakir, fell at his feet and presented his woe before him. The fakir said to him, 'I had never thought ill of you.' Reflecting for a while he found out how the things had happened. Then he said, 'Just as you could not bear a small trouble to your beloved, so my beloved (satguru, Allah) could not bear your ill treatment to me. He punished you for what you had done. You misbehaved, so you must face the consequences.' The young couple fell at the fakir's feet and cried for mercy. The benign fakir prayed to the Lord to forgive them, and the prayer was granted. The fakir blessed them and asked them to go to hospital once again and told them that it would be all right by the grace of God. Providentially, a specialist from abroad happened to be visiting the hospital. Examining the case he said that amputation could be avoided and he prescribed a treatment. The man became all right after the treatment for about three months.

"Fakirs and ill wish; these two cannot go together."

Question: "Does the Lover (preceptor, God) take revenge for the wrong done to His beloved?"

Master: "Yes, He cannot tolerate even a slight harm to His dear ones.

"There lived an ecstatic (*mast*) fakir. One hot summer afternoon, he arrived at a mosque. At that time, the mullah was reading Quran Shareef. The fakir requested the mullah for a place where he could take rest for a while. The mullah directed him to a room. The fakir did not lie down in the room; instead, he sat in meditation. Presently, a sparrow fluttering in the room dropped a straw on the fakir and that disturbed his meditation. The fakir looked at the sparrow. It dropped dead on the floor. The mullah who was reading Quran Shareef, was keeping an eye on the fakir. When he had finished reading, he went to the fakir, spoke harshly to him and blamed him saying that even though he was a fakir he was taking the lives of innocent birds. The fakir remained quiet as long as the mullah spoke. When the mullah had fully given vent to his anger, the fakir said to him, 'I swear by Quran Shareef that I had no idea in my mind about harming the bird. I had thought of no ill will towards the bird. But it is said that God does not bear even the

fall of a straw upon those who have fully surrendered to Him. I cannot say what He does for those who are dear to Him.’

“The fakirs have the attitude of a *hamsa*¹; they neither see evil in anybody, nor do they harm anybody.

¹ a kind of swan

“O jiva, you must abandon the spirit of a crow and imbibe the spirit of a *hamsa*, and thus you will attain salvation.”

Question: “Sir, what is the spirit of a crow and What is the spirit of a *hamsa*? Kindly clarify the distinction between the two?”

Master: “*Hamsas* live on the banks of Mansarovar Lake on the top of the Himalayas. There the air is gentle, pure and holy. (*Mansarovar represents satsang*). Persons having pure and holy attitude live in the company of saints. Crows live at lower altitudes—among the common folk—and they like noise and turmoil. A person having the spirit of a crow is entangled in the material world and his mind is polluted by hopes and desires.

“Secondly, *hamsas* are sober and quiet. They talk little and only when it is necessary. Jivas having this sort of attitude practise silence and concentration. They meditate on ‘not I but You’, and use their breath for the right purpose. Jivas having the spirit of a crow are always talking and wasting their breath.

“Thirdly, a *hamsa* eats pearls and drinks milk. It separates, with its beak, milk from water and drinks only milk. Jivas having the *hamsa*-spirit sing in the praise of the Lord (that is, they eat pearls). Leaving aside the *asat*—the unreal (water)—they take only *sat* (milk). On the other hand crows seek refuse and dirty things. People having the crowlike attitude see evil everywhere, speak ill of others and are concerned with the unreal (*asat*).

“Fourthly, *hamsas* eat only when they get something to eat, or else they remain quiet. A person having the *hamsa*-spirit is always contented. He totally depends on God. Crows snatch things from others. The worldly people are always motivated by greed.

“You can see the vast difference between the two attitudes. A jiva must abandon the spirit of a crow and imbibe the spirit of a *hamsa*. This will lead him to salvation.”

Question: “Sir, what kind of a jiva avoids speaking ill of others?”

Master: “He whose mind is directed to the beloved and whose mind is

saturated with anguish and is ever yearning for the beloved, and who has attained merger (*fanai*) in the beloved, bears the spirit of a *hamsa*. He cannot do anything else because he cannot withdraw his mind from there. His concentration is so firmly developed that he perceives nothing but the beloved. He sees the beloved everywhere. How can such a jiva see faults in others or speak ill of others?”

Question: “Sir, can it then be said that the seeker who does not see evil in others must be a true lover, or a saint, or one who has renounced the world?”

Master: “That is right. But why should we think in terms of renunciation of the world? What is wrong with the world? The lovers of God (fakirs) live in the world. It is a privilege to see them.”

An elderly devotee: “Sir, it is thus established that there is no virtue better than not seeing the faults of others. In this context, I am reminded of an episode of Hazrat Ali. May I narrate it, with your permission?”

Master: “Yes, please do.”

Elderly devotee: “Once a sheet of ochre cloth descended from the heavens with the instructions that it might be put on one who really deserved it. Prophet Mohammed was puzzled and was unable to decide who could be the deserving person and what should be his attributes. The Prophet enquired of God, ‘My Lord, shall I put it on him who has prayed to Thee the best?’ The reply was in the negative. The Prophet then asked, ‘My Lord, shall it be for him who has served Thy creation the best?’ Again the reply was in the negative. The Prophet then asked, ‘My Lord, if it is neither prayer nor service, shall it be presumed that it is for him who has been most generous and given everything in charity?’ The reply came that it should be for him who has concealed the sins of others. The Prophet then wondered who might be the deserving person. Unable to decide, he requested the Lord to suggest the deserving person. The reply was, ‘It is for Hazrat Ali.’ No doubt, Hazrat Ali was rich in this quality. He never exposed the failings of others. Ochre cloth signifies ‘covering others’, and ‘not seeing the faults and sins in others’. Fakirs generally wear ochre clothes, signifying that they provide cover to everybody. A seeker is fit to use ochre cloth only when he develops this attribute in himself. Then and then only he is fit to be called a fakir.”

Master: “That is right. I will not give credit to a seeker who sees faults in others, no matter whether he is able to fly and wields various occult powers. Saintliness is still far away in his case.”

Elderly devotee: “Sir, you have explained and stressed the spirit of not

seeing faults in others. But how to be relieved of the tendency of finding faults in others, which is very deeply rooted in our minds?”

Master: “A jiva should check or control himself when the awareness of other’s faults arises in his mind. When he happens to see faults, he should forget them. As he progresses further in love and devotion (*bhakti*) and attains absorption, he will be so busy in introspection that he will not be free to see the faults in others.

“In addition, a jiva must cultivate anguish within and weep intensely so that his attitude of duality vanishes. He is considering others distinct from himself. So long as he has not developed anguish within, he would continue to find faults with others because he is not yet relieved of the spirit of duality. Anguish is a wonderful thing. A seeker having anguish is kind-hearted and he cannot see faults in others.”

A devotee: “Sir, how to develop anguish or the attitude to weep continually? This is a great thing. Kindly suggest to us a simple prescription for practice.”

Master: (*with smile*): “All right. A jiva should do these two things:

- (i) He should not see faults in others and speak ill of others, and
- (ii) He should not hear ill of others.

“When he is engaged in this practice, a time may come when a tidal wave carries him on its crest to a place where he earns immense benefit.”

MEETING 30

EXCLUSIVE DEPENDENCE ON GOD

(Tawakkul Khuda)

SHANTI NAGAR 31 March, 1956

I arrived here in the morning at about ten. Soon after my arrival, an elderly man entered the hall and paid obeisance to the Master. The Master then addressed him.

Master: “Sir, how are you? What is the news?”

Elderly person: “Sir, this morning I witnessed a tragic happening which has sent a shock wave into my mind.”

Master: “A tragic happening? What is it about?”

Elderly person?: “A woman living in a barrack very near to ours went out for work in the morning leaving behind her two small children locked inside the barrack. Suddenly a fire broke out in the adjoining barrack. Due to a strong wind, the fire spread to the barrack in which the children had been locked. Both the children were roasted alive. When the woman returned home, she became unconscious on seeing the tragedy. As she regained consciousness, she wailed and cried. The entire neighbourhood came under a pall of gloom. Feeling very sad and being unable to control my feelings I have come here to seek solace. How can we help her? The children cannot be brought to life again. I feel very sad.”

Master: “It is a very tragic and pitiable happening. It seems that it had been destined like that. The woman did not leave the children to the care of the Lord. She was guided by her intellect (reasoning), so she met with this fate. This is what happens when one depends upon oneself. One should try to depend on the Lord.”

The old man remained there for about an hour and then left.

The satsang started in the afternoon as usual. After the reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha was over, the Master spoke.

Master: “This morning I learnt of a tragic happening in the neighbourhood. A woman had locked her two small children in her house and gone out for work. In her absence, a fire broke out and the two children were reduced to

ashes. (*pause*) When a jiva depends on the Lord and surrenders everything to Him, he is saved from much botheration and receives immense benefits. As you can see, what happens when one depends upon one's intellect. On the other hand, things that are apparently impossible happen when one seeks dependence upon the Lord. Nothing is impossible for the Lord. He is benign and takes care of the helpless. He grants support to those who are without support. He is omnipotent and can do anything. We have only to surrender ourselves to Him."

A devotee: "Sir, I, too, had visited the scene. It was a pitiable tragedy. But, sir, it is difficult to look at one's own doing. May be the happening was the result of her past deeds (karma)."

Master: "Well, it may be granted that it was the result of her karma. Nevertheless, it could have been avoided had she surrendered the children to the care of the Lord. What is impossible in the Court of the Lord? You must have read how the Lord helps those who seek refuge under Him in difficult times. We come across innumerable examples of this kind in the life stories of the (Sikh) Gurus, and in Ramayana, Mahabharata and other scriptures. What is impossible in the Court of the Lord? Nothing is impossible for Him. He takes full care of those who exclusively depend upon him."

Question: "Sir, would you give us some instances from your life?"

Master: "There are innumerable instances of His favours and kindness upon me and these continue even to this day."

A devotee: "Sir, tell us something about them."

The group (*in chorus*): "Sir, tell us something."

Master: "I have already told you about my experiences in Aden and how the Revered Master took care of me when I was working in the hospitals for contagious diseases. I used to sit with patients suffering from these diseases and perform such duties as even the ward attendants would not do. My work was liked by the authorities. In appreciation of my devoted service, the Government decided to confer upon me the title of *Rai Sahib*. But I declined. However, I accepted a gold watch as an award from the Government.

"Once I was posted as Assistant Medical Officer at the Government Civil Hospital at Shikarpur (Sind). The Civil Surgeon (Hospital Superintendent) was an extremely competent and honest person; nevertheless, he was very suspicious and short-tempered. He expected everyone to be honest like him. In case he had a doubt on anyone of his subordinates, he would beat him with a whip. He would not spare even the doctors. He had treated my predecessors

in a like manner. One day, while I was working in the office, some people entered my room to enquire about something. As it was not the time for patients to visit the hospital, I politely told them to come the next day. They argued with me for some time. The Civil Surgeon was watching us from a distance. Suspecting that I was trying to take bribe from the visitors and that the arguments were about the amount of bribe, he instantly took his whip and rushed towards me. Seeing this, I went up to him. At that age I was very strong and was also fond of wrestling. Holding his hand firmly I asked him what he was up to and told him that it was not right for him to act without enquiring about the facts. I told him the facts and the visitors also corroborated my statement. After a few days, he went for hunting. He was fond of hunting and used to go to the jungle every Sunday. On that day he did not return home. We learnt that he was killed by wolves.”

Question: “Sir, did you get divine help during financial difficulties?”

Master: “Yes, on innumerable occasions. Once I had to pay one thousand rupees against a court decree. It was not in regard to my work, yet I had to pay that amount. It was a problem for me to procure that large sum. Naturally, I was worried. The order had to be complied with within one month. In the meantime, a rich person in the town fell ill. He tried many doctors but with no result. A friend of mine suggested to him that he could arrange for a doctor for him provided he promised to pay to the doctor a fee of one thousand rupees. The desperate rich man readily agreed to the condition. At that time I was in Karachi. My friend sent me a telegram asking me to come to Rohri to treat his ailing friend. I went there and treated the rich man and he recovered from his illness within a few days. My friend brought me a packet containing one thousand rupees. I was surprised. He had told me nothing in advance about the condition he had put to the rich man nor was he aware of my need. Assuming it to be divine grace, I accepted the amount and thanked the Lord. I paid the amount in the court.

“On another occasion I needed five hundred rupees very urgently. I asked a commission agent to arrange for a loan on interest from the market. The agent tried very much but could not procure the amount. An astrologer, who had seen my horoscope some days earlier had told me that I would need money during that period and he had advised me not to approach anybody for a loan because I would get none, however hard I tried for that. It happened as the astrologer had predicted. I could not get a loan. Next month some rich men returned to the town after their business assignments elsewhere. One of them

learnt about my problem and he felt very sorry for the difficulties I had faced. He offered me one thousand rupees and asked if I needed more. I declined the offer saying to him that I needed money in the previous month and not at that time and thanked him for his nice gesture. That taught me a lesson for a lifetime that I should depend on Allah only and none else.

“I will tell you about one more episode. It was the time of the marriage of my son Hari. There was nothing at home”.

The Master could not complete his sentence as someone came to remind him that it was the time for him to visit a religious ceremony in the neighbourhood. The Master left with some devotees. We were about ten persons including some old associates of the Master left in the hall. I requested an old associate of the Master to narrate to us the incidents which the Master was about to tell us. He agreed to my request.

Elderly devotee: “The Master had nothing with him at the time of the first marriage of his eldest son, Dr Hari. Arrangements for the marriage were being made on a grand scale unprecedented in the town. Invitations were sent out in large numbers. The Master’s eldest brother got worried. He thought that the Master being a saintly person was unmindful of what he was doing and would not be able to clear the bills and that he (brother) would have to bear all the responsibilities and settle the bills. Nevertheless, the preparations continued without any hindrance. At that time there was no electricity in the town. A rich man who had a personal generator in his ice factory, offered to provide electricity from his factory. Arrangements were made to decorate the house with electric lights. Another rich man volunteered to have a well dug in the house for the convenience of the guests. Food grain and money poured in from various sources. Some parcels carried the inscription: To Dr Rochaldas; from Dr Rochaldas. There was free kitchen for all in the town for eight days. Many saints and fakirs came. Everyone was looked after very well. It was a big marriage procession. Festivities and excitement were boundless. Bhagat Kanwar Ram Sahib, the famous saint-singer of Sind, gave very pleasing programmes. Some devotees were assigned the charge of keeping the accounts and they managed everything. When the accounts were finalised after the marriage, it was found that the expenditure had exceeded seven thousand rupees. That was a huge sum in those days. But the Master did not know how and from where the things had come and were managed. Assuming that it was the grace of the Lord, he thanked Him from the core of his heart. Even now when someone reminds him of those days, tears come to

his eyes. He says, ‘The grace of the Lord on that occasion was worth noting. The Lord Himself took care of the things. What was I otherwise?’ And it was the truth. The panchayat in the town got suspicious. People alleged that Doctor Sahib had concealed wealth and was pretending that he had nothing. They questioned how festivities and pomp and show could be arranged on such a large scale without adequate funds. An enquiry was held and it was eventually proved that the Master had nothing. The Lord had looked after his devotee. It has been said in Guru Granth Sahib:

*Santan ke karaj ap khiloya,
Kam karavan aya Ram*
(He came to look after the saints,
Rama came to get things done.)

So was the case here. We know many more examples of the Master’s exclusive dependence on God. I am reminded of one.

“When it was the time for the marriage of the second daughter of the Master, he had nothing with him. One of his devotees thought that it would not be possible for the Master to meet the expenses of the marriage, and that his son-in-law, the husband of his eldest daughter, would have to foot all the bills. The Master could read the mind of the devotee, but he remained silent. When the time for the marriage approached and duties for the arrangements were assigned to different individuals, the devotee who had entertained the doubt was assigned the duty of maintaining accounts. After the marriage was over, that devotee was astonished to find how the Lord had taken care of the Master. He sought the Master’s pardon for what he had conceived in his mind.

“I shall now give you one more instance. A devotee planned to test the Master how far he (the Master) depended on the Lord. At that time, the Master was staying at Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad and was about to leave for Karachi to see a patient there. The devotee stealthily checked the pockets of the Master’s coat and verified that the Master had only one and a half rupees with him. That amount was enough only to pay for the horse carriage from Dargah Sahib to the railway station. The devotee was to accompany the Master. He resolved in his mind that he would purchase a railway ticket for the Master from Hyderabad to Karachi only if the Master asked him to do so. As they reached the railway station, the Master paid the carriage fare.

Alighting from the carriage, they quietly stood at the railway station. Neither the Master asked the devotee to purchase a ticket, nor did the devotee volunteer to do it on his own. The two stood there quietly. When it was about the time for the arrival of the train, a rich man who was previously known to the Master, suddenly appeared there. He was surprised to see the Master. After paying obeisance, he enquired of the Master where he was going. The Master told him that he was going to Karachi. The rich man made a request that if he (the Master) had not already purchased the train tickets, he might be permitted to purchase them because he, too, was going to Karachi. The Master agreed. The devotee was surprised to find that the rich man had purchased upper class tickets. He felt ashamed of his doing and sought the Master's pardon and promised him that he would not act like that in future."

A lady devotee: "I shall narrate to you some of my experiences in this regard. There were occasions when the Master did not have even a grain of rice or wheat in the house. His wife would bake chapatis of only gram flour for the meals, with nothing else to eat. Once there was no rice in the house. Annoyed at it she complained about his being too busy with the work in the dispensary and spiritual pursuits and that there was no rice in the house. Telling her that if there was no rice she should make chapatis of wheat flour, the Master went out to attend to the patients. After a short while a coolie with a rice bag on his head knocked at the door and said that the bag had been sent by the Master. When the Master came home for lunch, he was surprised to find rice. He asked his wife where rice had come from. Smilingly she said, 'You sent it and now you are asking about it.' The Master had no difficulty in realising that the Lord had inspired someone to send them rice. He quietly thanked the Lord in his mind. Nobody knew who had sent the bag of rice. The Lord had always taken care of him secretly. Nobody can cultivate such firm dependence on God as he had done.

"I shall narrate one more instance. Once his daughter-in-law needed some money to send a present to her niece on the occasion of her marriage. She asked the Master for some money. On checking his pockets, the Master found that he did not have enough money for a present. As he was leaving for the railway station to go to some other town to see a patient he said to her, 'Let us wait and see what the divine will is.' At the railway station a devotee put a packet containing thirty rupees in the Master's pocket. The Master instantly sent it to his daughter-in-law to buy a present."

As we were talking, the sister-in-law of the Master (his brother's widow)

entered the hall. Joining us in our talks she told us, at our request, that while his eldest son Hari happened to be seriously ill, the Master would often go out of the town to attend to the patients, leaving Hari under the care of the Lord. He acted in the same manner when his younger son Pritam, was seriously ill. Who would leave his seriously ailing children to attend to patients elsewhere?

The Master returned to the hall after attending the ceremony in the neighbourhood. We put chairs in the courtyard and sat around him.

Master: “How did you keep yourselves busy?”

A devotee: “Sir, we were discussing about dependence on God.”

Master: “That is good. Dependence on God means that a jiva considers nothing his own. In the event of a loss he should think that he has lost nothing. It is not right to consider oneself a fakir when one has money in a bank. Saintly living means that one spends away what one has and then depends on the Lord. There have been fakirs who depended on the Lord to such an extent that they emptied water-containers at night and did not keep a drop of water for the next day. They let the morrow take care of itself.

“Once a merchant fell in love with God. The Lord sent him a gift of His love—suffering. The merchant was reduced from millions to thousands. Disappointed, he said to the Lord that he did not want His love and friendship, and that he would like to break off his bond with Him. The Lord said to him, ‘Let it be decided later. Would you, in the meantime, do one thing for Me? Carry a bag of wheat and deliver it to a particular saint.’ The merchant went to the saint with a bag of wheat. The saint asked the merchant to wait so that he could first check what was already available in the kitchen inside. After checking, the saint told the merchant that he had wheat flour for the breakfast and when it would be finished, the Lord would take care of it. He refused to accept the bag of wheat. The merchant was rudely shaken at it. He said to himself, ‘How does it matter if millions have been lost? I have still some thousands with me. Let the future take care of itself. My Allah is there to look after me. Let me follow the example of the saint.’ He told the Lord that he would not break off the bond of love with Him. The Lord said to him, ‘If once someone establishes relationship of love with Me, I do not break it off, no matter what he does’.”

Question: “Sir, how to develop the attitude of exclusive dependence upon the Lord?”

Master: “A jiva should surrender himself to the beloved. The self includes

everything—his family, prestige, wealth, etc. God takes care of the jiva who consigns all cares to Him. He makes things easy for him. He inspires others and they try on behalf of the jiva. Let a jiva once surrender himself to his satguru. God takes full care of such a person. Let us take the example of Draupadi. As long as she depended upon her husbands (five Pandavas), none of them could come to her rescue in her calamity when she was being undressed in the court of Duryodhana. Her husbands were brave warriors and had conquered great enemies on the battlefield, yet none of them could raise a finger to protect her. When she abandoned all other sources and sought refuge under Lord Krishna, she got instant protection. The Lord is very kind. One has only to depend upon Him. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Surrender all your cares to the Lord,
Dispel doubts and have firm faith,
Everything is attained by the grace of God.”

Question: “Sir, is surrendering oneself to God the only prerequisite for achieving exclusive dependence on God, or are there some additional prerequisites, too?”

Master: “Besides surrendering oneself, one has to practise three more things. These are:

1. Continuous penitence
2. Continuous yearning for the Lord
3. Renunciation of desire

“Renunciation of desire implies abandoning greed and avarice. One can achieve dependence on God when one abandons greed and avarice. Renunciation leads to total dependence on God.”

It was about sunset. Everybody remained quiet. After about twenty minutes the Master with most of the devotees went into the hall. A few of us, however, remained behind in the courtyard. An elderly devotee spoke to us.

Elderly devotee: “The Master has practised total dependence on God in all respects—not merely materially—because he has totally surrendered himself to the Lord. He has practised spiritual discipline without any desire or expectation of success or failure. He has done that just in the name of the Lord. That is the highest form of surrender, so he has succeeded in the attainment of the goal. It has been observed that seekers on the spiritual path generally get involved in occult powers. Desires are an impediment to

spiritual progress. Hence the Master always says that this is the path of desirelessness. One has to abandon all desires and hopes and seek dependence on the Lord and to continue one's march in this manner. Therein lies the salvation for the jiva.”

MEETING 31

SAMADHI

MARINE DRIVE BOMBAY 19 July, 1956

As I arrived here in the morning, I found the Master and four devotees ready to leave for somewhere. After I had paid obeisance to him, the Master said to me, “We are going to visit a saint. Please join us if you are free.” I agreed and we got into a car. We reached Juhu Beach in about half an hour. A big tent had been erected there and it was packed with audience. It was a religious conference presided over by Ananda Mayee Ma, a lady saint who had been invited from Brindaban. The Master had been introduced to her about 30-35 years ago. It was the concluding session of the conference and it ended about half an hour after our arrival. We had taken our seats near the dais, but she could not recognise the Master. Perhaps due to the long gap of 30-35 years she could not recognise him. We had planned to meet her in her room just behind the tent and had accordingly sent her a message in advance. But because she had to leave urgently for somewhere the Master could not meet her. We returned to our place.

The satsang started in the evening as usual. The selection related to the story of Bhakt Dhruva. When the reading was over, a young devotee put a question.

Question: “Sir, there was a reference in the scripture that Bhakt Dhruva had entered *samadhi*. What is *samadhi*?”

Master: “*Samadhi* is the state of absorption of *chitta* in the divine element.”

Devotee: “Sir, kindly explain it in detail.”

Master: “*Samadhi* is the state of *chitta* when the ideations (*sankalpas*) are checked or the modifications of *chitta* are stopped and quiescence is attained. With the attainment of quiescence and absorption in the divine element, one goes deep into meditation. Therefore, various names such as diving deep and attainment of absorption have been assigned to *samadhi*.”

Question: “Sir, is there only one kind of *samadhi* or are there different stages of *samadhi*?”

Master: “There are two kinds of *samadhi*—physical and mental. Physical *samadhi* envisages fixation of body posture. *Hatha yogis* practise that. Mental *samadhi* envisages stability of the thought, and here one is required to use the

heart, the gaze and the head (contemplation). The samadhis of the heart, head and gaze are spiritual samadhis. When a seeker who is engaged in physical samadhi returns from the samadhi to the normal plane, he loses peace in the face of the ups and downs and the tensions of the world. But once the stability of thought is attained, one remains stable and absorbed in spite of the anxieties and tensions. Stability of the thought process is more valuable than the physical stability.”

Question: “Sir, what are the states of mental samadhi?”

Master: “There are two states of mental samadhi: *savikalpa* or *saguni* state and *nirvikalpa* or *nirguni* state. *Savikalpa samadhi* is within the realm of the five elements, and is also within the cosmic illusion (*triguni maya*). It is related to names and forms. Here, one enters into samadhi by concentrating on a name or a form. Thus, it is associated with names and forms. On the spiritual path, as one attains to greater depths in this kind of samadhi, one sees the beloved in everything. This state in samadhi should be maintained even while one is engaged in various actions—eating, drinking, etc—but the common people must not know or notice one’s samadhi. The *saguni* samadhi where even-cognition is attained, is excellent and supremely commendable. It is sustained even while one is awake. Nevertheless, the other samadhis which are of lower level, are also praiseworthy.”

Question: “Sir, I saw a saint in Karachi who could remain in samadhi for sixteen hours in a day. Isn’t that a case of superior samadhi?”

Master: “That is fine, but I have seen persons who remained in samadhi for 22 to 24 hours in a day. These samadhis are either physical or mental. In any case, the quality of a samadhi is not determined in terms of hours.”

Question: “Sir, who were the people whom you saw in samadhi for 22 to 24 hours in a day? Were they sanyasis or householders?”

Master: “Some were sanyasis and some were householders. I saw a *sadhu* (hermit) from Bengal who used to remain in trance (*anasruti*—when one does not have external consciousness) for most of the time. He stayed as a guest at my house in Rohri. Once I took him on a trip on a boat. We were a small group. As the devotional singing was going on, the sadhu entered into samadhi. He opened his eyes in a short while. I asked him, ‘Sir, what is the purpose in your entering into samadhi intermittently?’ He replied, ‘I get bliss (ananda)’. I asked him, ‘If you get bliss, why do you leave it and enter into conversation with us? It indicates that bliss is not there and the state of bliss is something different. Otherwise, who would leave bliss?’ The sadhu could

not give a reply.

“I will give you another example of a lady saint whom I visited this morning. Some years ago she was living in Dehradun. Presently, she lives in Brindaban and has an ashram there. I had gone to Dehradun about 30-35 years ago. There I heard about her and proposed to my friends to visit her. Initially, my friends said that nothing could be gained by visiting her because she was always in samadhi and she did not talk to anybody. I told them that if I could not talk to her, I would at least see her (have her *darshan*). So we went to see her. She was married to an officer who lived in Delhi. Her secretary assisted her. When we arrived at her place, we found that she was in trance. But soon she opened her eyes and looked around. When she saw me I moved near to her. Finding a suitable opportunity, I asked her, ‘Mother, would you like to go out with me?’ Intervening, her secretary said, ‘She does not know anything. How can she go out with you?’ But she (the secretary) was surprised when Ananda Mayee Ma said, ‘I shall go with him.’ A horse carriage was sent for. We went round in a group of four or five persons. After some time she said, ‘My son, your time is over, you may now go.’ I said, ‘What is ordained by the Lord is good for me.’ These used to be her pet words and prayer, and I happened to say the same words. I took leave of her. For some time, we wrote letters to each other. I had not met her for years. A few days ago as I learnt that she had come to Bombay to preside over a religious conference, I went to see her. Owing to the long gap of time, she could not recognise me, but I had recognised her.”

Question: “Sir, of what types were the samadhis of the two saints?”

Master: “Both are the examples of *savikalpa* samadhi. When one sees the beloved in everything, that marks the attainment of the perfect *savikalpa* samadhi”.

Question: “Sir, when one sees the beloved everywhere, can it be presumed to be an illustration of the supreme samadhi?”

Master: “Yes, but only among various types of *savikalpa* samadhi. There is, however, a trace of duality, though slight, in *savikalpa* samadhi. There is the duality of the seer and the seen. The samadhi devoid of the duality is *nirvikalpa* samadhi.

“*Nirvikalpa* samadhi is wonderful, it is matchless. It is the samadhi on the formless and not on a form or an object. It is beyond the realm of triguni maya, and of forms and names. It is beyond the ideas of ‘I’ and ‘You’. Rather, one has to renounce renunciation, too, at this stage. Words fail to

describe this state. It is an experiential state and is the supreme samadhi.

“Let us see what the word ‘samadhi’ indicates. It is made up of two words: *sam* and *adi* meaning that in samadhi there is no consciousness except of the Primordial state. This is the true samadhi.”

Question: “Sir, I have heard of *sahaj samadhi* (natural samadhi) also. What is that?”

Master (*after a pause*): “*Sahaj samadhi* is that state of chitta concentration where the chitta is absorbed in or united with the Primordial Being in all states of work and activity. This is the supreme samadhi and is superior to all other states of samadhi.”

Question: “Sir, could you tell us who has excelled most in samadhi and who comes next?”

Master; “According to me Sada Shiv is number one in samadhi and Bhakt Dhruva comes next in order. The samadhis of the two are wonderful.

“We have talked a lot on samadhi. Let us now have some devotional music.”

Singers: Study and realise the Self,

Scriptures are the realisation of others.

Lanka, Ganga¹ are in your head,

Annihilate self and enjoy the bliss.

Rama and Krishna are within you,

Know that truly well.

Sita and Lakshman are at your door,

Endeavour and realise.

Our vision is faulty,

Rama and Rahim are within, O Qutab¹.

And

Concentrate always, O lover,

The Lord is within you,

Understand and be alert,

The resting place is within.

Why do you wander

On land, water, forests and hills?
You gain nothing there,
Your journey is in your head.
Be always in love,
And search the self.
You are flower and fragrance,
The beloved is within you.
Take the cup of selflessness,
Drink with humility.
Fix your thoughts
Entirely in anguish.
Break instantly with your upsurge
The bonds of the cares.
The treasure of Oneness
Is with you, O Piral².

1 places of Hindu pilgrimage

1 name of the poet, the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah

2 name of the poet

As the devotional music was going on, a Muslim gentleman dressed in a long white coat and salwar, entered the hall with a devotee. The Master got up, greeted him and offered him a chair by his side. The visitor declined to sit on a chair and sat on the mat with all the devotees. After the singing was over, the Master enquired about his well-being, etc. In reply, the visitor said that he was fortunate to see the Master. On further enquiries he said, “I hail from the Mughal dynasty and am a *hakeem* by profession. I belong to the family of *hakeems*¹. I was born in the erstwhile state of Patiala and my father was a physician to the Maharaja of Patiala. Having lived among Sikhs I have learnt Guruvani very well. I remember it partly by heart and can also interpret that.” He was served some refreshments. After some time he took leave of the Master. The Master asked the host to take *hakeem sahib* to his residence in his car. The host readily agreed. When he returned after about an hour, the Master asked him, “Did you leave him at his place? How did you spend the

time with him on the way?” The host replied, “Sir, he did not allow me time to speak. He did all the talking. He was very happy and excited and was all praise for the Master.....”. The Master said, “That is all right” and went into another room.

1 physicians who practise Unani system of therapy

I asked the host, “What did the *hakeem* tell you?” He said, “I cannot describe his excitement. He was all praise for the Master. He thanked me immensely for having introduced him to the Master. He said that a meeting with a sage like the Master was a rare opportunity and it was a matter of great luck. About the Master, he said, ‘Do you know who he is? He is *Wali Allah*. According to Muslims, this is the highest state among the human beings. What the Hindus call an incarnation of God, we Muslims call *Wali Allah*—a friend of Allah—and not Allah. Allah is formless and He is *Wahid*’. I asked him how could he say that. He said, ‘As I entered the hall, I had the true vision of the fakir (the Master). There was a halo round his head and light was radiating around him. I have met many a fakir and know how to recognise a fakir. On the basis of these and other indications, I had no hesitation in realising that I was in the presence of a perfect sage, *Wali Allah*’.”

The host also told me, “I have no doubt that my guest was honest in his remarks and there was no exaggeration in what he said. He has asked me to take him to Shanti Nagar at the earliest opportunity. I told him that the death anniversary of the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah) would be celebrated next Sunday. He has asked me to take him along. Giving him details of the celebrations, I told him that people from outside are invited to give spiritual talks on Sri Ramayana, Srimad Bhagwad Gita, etc. He volunteered to give a talk on that occasion. When I asked him about the topic he would like to speak on, he said that he would talk on Sufism or on any scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, etc. I was surprised and promised him that I would put his request before the Master.”

MEETING 32

ANNIHILATION OF THE SELF

(Fanai)

SHANTI NAGAR 29 and 30 July, 1956

Today is the death anniversary of the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah). We left Bombay early in the morning in a group of six persons. Hakeem Sahib who had met the Master last week in Bombay was also with us. On arriving at Shanti Nagar, as we entered the hall, we found it packed with devotees. The Master was sitting in a chair. He greeted Hakeem Sahib and offered him a seat on the mat near him.

Reading from Sri Ramayana was going on. It had already been fixed that Hakeem Sahib would give a talk on Sri Japa Sahib¹. As the reading from Sri Ramayana was over, the Master requested Hakeem Sahib to speak.

¹ It forms the opening section of Guru Granth Sahib.

Hakeem Sahib got up, saluted the *sangat* with folded hands and then started reciting Sri Japa Sahib. He recited it so well that it became obvious that he had been trained in it since his childhood. Everybody present was impressed to see a Muslim reciting Sri Japa Sahib in such an excellent manner. Then he started explaining each stanza. He began with the opening sloka; *Ek Onkar, Satnam, Karta Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair*. Coming to the words *Nirbhau, Nirvair* he said:

“Have you seen a person who is *nirbhau* (without fear) and *nirvair* (free from animosity)? I shall show you. (*pointing to the Master*) Look at him. The *buzurg*² among us is free from fear and animosity. According to the Hindu faith, he is an incarnation of the Lord. According to the Muslim faith, we call such a person *Wali Allah*, meaning that he is a friend of Allah. This is the literal meaning. Its true meaning is that the seeker has attained to the Lord in all respects. The pictures on the wall bear testimony to this. You find here the pictures of prophets of all faiths or religions—pictures of Sri Ramchandra,

Sri Krishna, Lord Budha, Christ, Zoroaster, etc. You might think that these pictures have been casually fixed here; it is not so. Unlike the actions of the ordinary people, the actions of a fakir are not without a purpose or significance. Every word uttered by a saint—even if it be a joke—carries significance. By that the saints explain indirectly what they want to say or do. With my limited intelligence, what I see or realise is that the saint here has attained absorption (*fanai*) in all these pictures. Here the pictures indicate that this is a centre where Oneness is taught. Please do not think of him as an ordinary person; he is a great power. Make no mistakes when you see him in an ordinary guise. You must not take liberties with him or show disrespect to him. Always treat him with love, respect and humility. You are fortunate in having such a great person among you. I, too, consider myself fortunate in having seen him. Dervishes like him are *nirbhau* and *nirvair*. How can they have fear or bear animosity when they perceive nothing but the Self? Whom shall they fear or have animosity against? Since it is only He Himself, where does the question of fear or animosity arise?”

2 a Persian word meaning a great saint

Hakeem Sahib then proceeded with the interpretation of other stanzas of the text. Having spoken for about forty-five minutes, he saluted everybody and then took his seat. All were delighted to hear him. He was a Muslim, yet his pronunciation and recitation of Sri Japa Sahib was perfect and charming. His interpretation was very good, and only a few among Hindus could match him.

He was followed by a sadhu who spoke on love and devotion and sang some devotional songs. It was 12:30 p.m. and was the time for lunch. The forenoon session ended.

We had a rest after lunch. Some of us had siesta but some were engaged in discussing what had happened in the forenoon.

I said to an elderly companion, “I have heard many a person explaining Sri Japa Sahib. We must give immense credit to Hakeem Sahib that being a Muslim he could explain it so well.”

The elderly companion said, “Yes, he deserves credit for that. But what impressed me more was that he could know and understand the Master in such a short time. Probably he has been in holy company and is spiritually

advanced.”

I said, “A friend of mine who brought him here says that Hakeem Sahib has been initiated on the spiritual path.”

The elderly companion then said, “There is no exaggeration in what Hakeem Sahib has said about the Master. It is true that the Master has attained to the state of *nirbhau* and *nirvair*. It is evident from his life-style.”

I asked him, “How would you term such a state according to the Vedanta?”

He said, “A jiva realises the Self when he attains to the state of *nirbhau* (fearlessness) and *nirvair* (non-animosity). That is the state of *turiya-atit*. In Sufistic terminology, it is the state of *baqa-ba-Allah*.”

There came the call for tea at 3 o’clock.

We assembled for satsang at 4 o’clock. It started with devotional singing which lasted for about three hours. It was sequentially conducted. Starting with the songs in praise of guru, it proceeded with the songs about karma marg, followed by the songs on bhakti marg. The bhakti songs created a blaze of love; many hearts were stirred and tears came in many eyes. Then came the songs on gyan. These helped in the flight of the thought process. One of the songs was:

When the feeling of *Ana-al-Haq* arose,
I lost my self and ego,
I lost the sense of body,
And was absorbed in Oneness,
I lost the self and realised the Truth,
And earned the supreme bliss.
The only sound within is *Ana-al-Haq*,
There is no other word besides,
I have realised the Truth,
There is no trace of duality.
I remain absorbed in ecstasy,
There is negation of the self.
Wandering in the cycle of eighty-four¹,
He calls himself by the name Qutab².

1 the cycle of rebirths

2 name of the poet, the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah

As the music ended, a question was put to the Master.

Question: “Sir, every saint says that one must lose the self and realise the Self. The Revered Master has also said so in the song that was just sung. But, sir, how can a jiva annihilate the self?”

Master: “The self is annihilated by certain endeavours or practices. One has to practise and go through the stages of annihilation or of *fanai*.”

Question: “Sir, what is *fanai*? How does a jiva benefit by it?”

Master: “*Fanai* is the state where a jiva loses his self and annihilates the ego. For him then the body is not the self and the thoughts are not his own. If he does not consider these his own, whose does he consider these to be? He feels that everything belongs to the Lord. This realisation is attained after various endeavours. According to Sufism, a jiva can realise Allah when he annihilates the self, or merges his being in the Absolute being. One cannot enjoy the divine bliss unless one attains absorption of this kind.”

Question: “Sir, what are the different stages of *fanai*?”

Master: “There are four stages of *fanai* (absorption or annihilation).

Fana-fi-al Sheikh
Fana-fi-al-Rasool
Fana-fi-Allah
Baqa-ba-Allah

We shall discuss each sequentially.

“*Fana-fi-al-Sheikh*: Sheikh means murshid, satguru or preceptor. *Fana-fi-al-Sheikh* signifies absorption, and merger of one’s own being, in the being of the *Sheikh*, and extinction of one’s own self. This is a kind of *saguni fanai*; in other words, it is absorption in a particular form. This leads to even-cognition. One sees the form of satguru everywhere and sees nothing else. A fakir has said

I see my friend wherever I look,
I see nothing but my friend.

“I shall quote the instance of the waterman of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, the tenth Guru, to illustrate even-cognition. The episode occurred on the battlefield where the Sikhs and the Mughals were fighting. A Sikh waterman was assigned the duty to serve water to Sikh soldiers on the battlefield.

During the battle, some Sikh soldiers noticed that the waterman was serving water both to the Sikh and the Mughal soldiers. The Sikh soldiers complained to Guruji (Guru Gobind Singh Ji) that the waterman was a traitor as he was serving water to the enemy soldiers who after drinking water were able to fight and killed Sikh soldiers, and that the waterman was thus helping the enemy to fight against them. Guruji ordered the waterman to be brought in his presence. When the waterman came, Guruji asked him if the charge against him was correct. The waterman replied, ‘Sir, you had very graciously taught me to fully concentrate on your form. By your grace, I have attained such an absorption (*fanai*) that I do not see anything, besides your face. I see only you all around me. Shall I refuse water if you ask me for it?’ Guruji was pleased with this reply and he blessed the waterman. He said, ‘Sikhs must be like this waterman. He is above all blame. Let him do as he pleases.’

“That is the state of even-cognition that is attained after certain things. It is a great thing. It is attained when one is in the company of saints who have annihilated their ego, and also when one practises and strives very hard.

“A jiva who has attained absorption (*fanai*) in the form of his satguru receives help in the face of suffering. Wherever he goes, he has the form of his satguru with him, and that perpetually helps him.

“There lived in Shikarpur (a town in Sind) a lady from the Masand¹ family. She had developed carbuncle as a result of diabetes and she needed urgent surgery. At that time I was about to go on a pilgrimage. The lady asked me to perform the operation before leaving. I told her that I needed the help of an anesthetist and he was not immediately available in the town. She said, ‘That is not necessary. Perform the operation and then go on the pilgrimage. Your compounder will do the dressing of the wound.’ I tried to dissuade her from being operated upon in the absence of anesthesia as it would be very painful for her. But she said, ‘Do not worry about that. I am a daughter of the Masands. Just signal to me before you use the knife.’ We made preparations for the operation. Before starting, I asked her if she was ready. She nodded. The operation was started and it took about an hour. She did not utter a word, nor did she cry during the entire process. She remained like a log of wood during the operation.

¹ Masands are followers of Guru Nanak.

“After the operation, I set out on pilgrimage. The compounder attended to her during my absence. On my return I found her in good health. How was it that she could withstand the operation in the absence of anesthesia? It was because she had attained *fanai*. She saw That during the operation. She was oblivious of her body.

“The deeper the absorption (*fanai*) attained by a jiva in the form of his satguru or in the *gurushabd*, the more intense would be the forgetfulness of his body.

“There lived a saint, Sultan Bahu by name. Once he had to cross a river along with his disciple. No boat was available at that time. Sultan Bahu asked the disciple to walk behind him continually uttering the word ‘Bahu’, and told him that they would thus walk on water. Sultan Bahu walked with the disciple behind him. As they were walking on water, the disciple heard his murshid gently uttering ‘Allah Hoo, Allah Hoo’. The disciple started doubting his murshid. He said to himself, ‘See the murshids of the present day. They ask their disciples to recite their names while they themselves remember Allah.’ So, instead of uttering ‘Bahu’, the disciple started saying ‘Allah Hoo’. No sooner had he done so than he started sinking. He cried telling his murshid that he was being drowned. The murshid asked him, ‘What has happened? Are you not uttering Bahu, Bahu?’ The disciple said, ‘No, I started saying Allah Hoo’. Sultan Bahu then said to him, ‘You have not yet reached Bahu and have started saying Allah Hoo. Do as you have been instructed.’ No sooner did the disciple start saying Bahu, Bahu, than he started walking on water and thus they crossed the river. Later, Sultan Bahu explained to the disciple, ‘You must first master the assigned lesson, attain to me, be firm in *fana-fi-al-Sheikh* and then the lessons regarding Allah will follow. You have not yet attained subtlety. You have not yet realised, in your conduct and living, the attributes of your murshid.’ A jiva cannot realise Allah without following the required techniques. These techniques are taught by the murshid. A jiva must first please his murshid. He must surrender himself to the murshid and attain absorption (*fanai*) in him.”

Question: “Sir, what is the purpose in attaining absorption (*fanai*) in the form of the satguru?”

Master: “A jiva can attain absorption in any object. Once a person had attained absorption in his buffalo. Some days later he felt and behaved as if he were a buffalo. He started moving like his buffalo. It indicates that one becomes what one concentrates upon. If one concentrates on an animal, one

would develop the qualities of that animal; if one concentrates upon ghosts one develops ghost-like behaviour; if one concentrates on saints, one develops the attributes of saints and if one develops absorption in one's satguru, one develops the attributes of the satguru and behaves like him.

“A jiva has to realise Allah. But Allah is supremely subtle. Only the like can unite with the like. How can a seeker who is still at the gross state be united with God? It is possible only when he attains subtlety. But who will he get subtlety from? His satguru has attained subtlety and the seeker can attain it if he attains absorption (*fanai*) in his satguru.

“There is an additional advantage in concentrating on the form of the satguru. If a seeker attains *fanai* in the form of his satguru, that form helps him and comes to his rescue in the event of any difficulty. That image continually helps him and promotes him further on his path. These are the great benefits of absorption in the image of the satguru.”

Question: “Sir, what should one practise or follow so that one is able to concentrate on the form of the satguru and attains absorption in that form?”

Master: “Everybody receives instructions according to his individual state and ability. When a seeker fully adheres to these, he attains the goal. A seeker must always be keen on attaining absorption (*fanai*). *Fanai* always triumphs. A jiva must endeavour for *fanai*. It matters little if he does not attain *fanai* in his present birth; he may attain that in the next birth. If he does not get the response (depth) now, he may get it in due course. He should continue to strive and must not abandon his endeavour.”

Question: “What tests indicate that a seeker has attained perfection in *fana-fi-al-Sheikh*?”

Master: “At that stage, the manners and the behaviour of a jiva are transformed. What he utters, materialises. He develops attraction and is able to attract others. People start following him. But he has to guard himself at that stage. For, at that stage, some seekers become gurus, and they are pleased with that. But one must not do that. No respite is admissible on this path; it is the path of unceasing endeavour. What does a seeker gain if he gets followers? He does not realise God with that. He does not realise the Self. He fails.

What if the world bows to you?
The aim is not to get a following.

(addressing a devotee) Please sing that song.”

Devotee: What if the world bows to you?

The aim is not to get a following.
You may talk of mysteries and of miracles,
But the Truth is not realised with that.
Many go on pilgrimage
For fun and show,
Telling the world
What wonders they do.
Address congregations,
Win applause in arguments,
Observe rituals and austerities,
But the Truth is not realised with that.
The goal is not realised, O Sachal¹,
Without the love of God.
Love is a unique gift of God,
Which grants bliss within.
Everything is misery-bound luxury,
Save anguish and austerities, O Sachal.

And

The murshid said,
If you wish to be a lover,
Seek not positions of pride.
Whether you be a priest,
A monk or a preacher,
These, too, cause suffering.

¹ name of the poet

Master: “After *fana-fi-al-Sheikh* is attained the seeker has to progress towards *fana-fi-al-Rasool*, and he has to attain that state.”

Question: “Sir, what does that indicate?”

Master: “*Fana-fi-al-Rasool* indicates attainment of absorption (*fanai*) in the prophet (*Rasool*) or the deity. The first stage marks absorption in the murshid or satguru and the second stage pertains to absorption in the prophet or the incarnation and becoming that.”

Question: “Sir, how should a seeker choose the deity?”

Master: “It may be according to the inclinations of the seeker. Some seek Sri Ramchandra or Sri Krishna or Guru Nanak, etc. It depends upon one’s own liking and inclinations. A satguru may also direct a seeker to attain *fanai* in a particular incarnation.”

Question: “Sir, what is the purpose of this *fanai* and what are its advantages?”

Master: “It is like a father directing his son to the grandfather. A satguru hands over or passes on a seeker to the elders so that he (the seeker) may attain greater subtlety.”

Question: “Sir, is it necessary for every seeker to have *fanai* in a deity or a prophet? Why should he who considers his satguru everything or Allah, seek absorption in a deity or an incarnation?”

Master: “*Fana-fi-al-Rasool* is essential for everyone. The *fanai* of the first stage, that is *fanai-fi-al-Seikh*, is absorption in a form and thus it is a *fanai* at the gross level; it is *saguni* absorption. A jiva has to progress further in the direction of subtlety. The absorption at higher levels is deeper and more subtle. A jiva cannot realise the Self unless he reaches these depths. God is supremely subtle. A jiva can be united with Him only when he attains deep subtlety.

“A jiva then has to transcend to the third level of absorption or *fanai* called *Fana-fi-Allah*.”

Question: “Sir, what should a jiva do to attain absorption (*fanai*) of this level?”

Master: “*Fana-fi-Allah* is a state of greater subtlety. At this stage, a jiva has to make use of contemplation. He has to attain absorption in the *shabd*, he has to lose his self in that. This is the *turiya* state.”

Question: “Sir, kindly tell us about the *fanai* of the fourth stage.”

Master: “This is the stage of *Baqa-ba-Allah*. It cannot be described by the gross senses or in words. All that can be said is that the jiva becomes the Self.

This stage is beyond *turiya* or *triguni maya*—the cosmic illusion. It is the state of *turiya-atit*.

“We have talked enough about *fanai* (absorption). Let us now have some devotional music.”

Singer: I renounced both the worlds,
And merged in That.
Look within your self,
Search the self with love,
Therein lies the truth,
That I discovered within myself.
Hearing the call of Oneness,
They do not remain at rest,
Shedding profuse tears,
We sought the path of love.
The heights of *lahoot*,¹
The glamour of *malkoot*,¹
The light of *jabroot*,¹
I saw all within.
Understand the secret, O Qutab,²
Love is unique,
And most pleasing,
I am absorbed in Love.

And

I was awakened by love,
And heard the call of Oneness,
I saw within the self,
All divine signs and attributes.
Hearing the talk of fear,³
Everyone speaks in terms of duality,
It is difficult to realise the Self,

And tear the veil of duality.
When my thoughts became stable,
And I merged in the ocean of Oneness,
I lost the sense of duality,
And enjoyed divine ecstasy.
Carrying one with its current,
Love makes one lose the self,
Only the rare among the brave
Succeed on the path of love.
Inebriated in love, O Daryakhan,⁴
I lost the self,
Realised the Truth,
And my mind attained the bliss.

1 different stages of spiritual growth

2 name of the poet, the Revered Master Sai Qutab Ali Shah

3 the fear that God awards retribution for our deeds or karma, which leads to the conviction that God is distinct or different from the self

4 name of the poet

The satsang ended at 7:30 p.m. and most of the devotees left for their homes.

30 July, 1956

The Master was very cheerful and in an unusually blissful mood the whole day. After the satsang in the evening, the Master sat in the courtyard in the company of seven devotees. While discussing, we talked about a particular lady saint. One of the devotees who had just returned from Brindaban talked about her ashram there and the size of the following she had. With reference to it a devotee who was quite free with the Master spoke.

Devotee: “Sir, when I was in Brindaban, I saw her. She calls herself Krishna. Likewise, I have met sadhus who call themselves Krishna, or Rama, or some other incarnation. But, sir, we always hear you talking of yourself as *banda*¹. Why is it so?”

Master (*after a pause*): “You are right. This is the path of contemplation, or of the thought process, and not of talking and of telling. What is important is the attainment of the mind or the attainment within.”

The Master became quiet. The devotee repeated her question.

Devotee: “Sir, could you kindly explain it in detail?”

Master: “That, too, is a state of duality. The best state is where one ceases to exist.”

Again, there was silence for a while.

Devotee: “Sir, we heard a good deal about *fanai* yesterday. The spiritual path appears to be highly arduous. One has to pass through the various stages of annihilation of the self. Considering all this, I feel that we haven’t endeavoured at all, and are great sinners.”

Another devotee (*with a smile*): “Sir, we have heard that when a seeker does not endeavour for progress on the spiritual path after initiation under a satguru, the satguru has to answer on his behalf before the Lord. Will you have to answer for us before the Lord?”

Master: “God can demand an answer only if He sees anyone besides Himself.”

There was silence again. In both the cases the Master indirectly gave the evidence of his having attained the state of *turiya-atit*. I was very much delighted to know that.

After a short while, someone put a question.

Question: “Sir, what is the way of life of a person who has attained to the state of *turiya-atit* or *baqa-ba-Allah*?”

Master: “Once, someone had put this very question to the Revered Master. At that time, the Revered Master was having a jar by his side in which mangoes had been kept for ripening in a stack of hay. Taking out a ripe mango, the Revered Master said that the lifestyle of a person who has attained to that state is sweet and attractive like this mango; he is liked by everybody and whoever approaches him is pleased with him.”

We were at once alerted on hearing this answer. Someone whispered, “All these qualities are present in the Master. This is an additional proof of the Master having been established in the state of *turiya-atit*.”

Someone put another question after a short while.

Question: “Does the path end at *baqa-ba-Allah*?”

Master: “Again, I will quote from the life of the Revered Master. Once the Revered Master was invited to the Ashram of Bhai Khimyanandadas. Bhai Keshavram Sahib, Bhai Gobindram Sahib (of Manjadhan), Bhai Kalachand and some other saints and dervishes were also present in the gathering. There used to be held such gatherings where great Sufi saints met and discussed spiritual matters among themselves. This was one such instance. A devotee in the gathering asked Bhai Kalachand, ‘Sir, what is the purpose of jiva’s assuming human birth? What is his aim?’ Bhai Sahib replied, ‘It is to realise the Self’. That person then asked, ‘Sir, is there a state further from Self-realisation, or does the march cease with that?’ Bhai Sahib replied, ‘Where is the question of a further march when one has realised the Self, or when one has attained the purpose for which one assumes the birth?’ The devotee then directed the same question to Bhai Keshavram Sahib, who remained silent and hinted that the question might be put to the Revered Master. The Revered Master was in meditation. The devotee then requested the person who had escorted the Revered Master to put the question to the Revered Master on their behalf. That person put the question to the Revered Master. The Revered Master said, ‘According to the Sufis the stage of Self-realisation is called *fana-fi-Allah*. That is one hit upon the ego. The path of bliss just starts from there. Beyond that, there is the infinite ocean of bliss. The *auliyas*, *nabis*, *qalandars*¹ and incarnations are still sailing in the ocean. The journey is unending.”

¹ saints of very high order

Question: “Sir, did the Revered Master visit temples and ashrams?”

Master: “At that time spiritual stalwarts—Bhai Keshavram Sahib, Bhai Hari Ram Sahib, Bhai Gobindram Sahib (of Manjadhan) and others—lived in the city of Hyderabad. Sometimes they visited the Revered Master, and sometimes the Revered Master visited them. They talked of spiritual matters in these meetings and exchanged their spiritual experiences. They discussed nothing besides this.”

A devotee: “Sir, we are told that the Revered Master had immense love and respect for Guru Nanak and the lineage of the Gurus. When someone (a

Hindu) approached him for initiation, he would invariably ask him, ‘Do you have faith in Guru Nanak? Do you visit a temple?’² If the person replied in the negative, the Revered Master would avoid initiating him.”

2 Guru Granth Sahib was generally kept and read as an important scripture in all temples in Sind. This practice is followed even today in temples maintained by the Sindhis in India, and in the Sindhi homes.

Master: “A person whose name was Bhai Ratan Lal used to regularly visit the Revered Master to recite Sri Sukhmani Sahib to him.”

Question: “Sir, there must be a purpose in what the Revered Master did.”

A devotee: “Sir, once a Sikh gentleman whose name was Pritam Singh, came to see the Revered Master. He had heard that he was a great sage and had realised God. When he entered into the presence of the Revered Master, he, like others, fully prostrated himself before him. He remained in the presence of the Revered Master for some time. When he went out, he was asked by his Sikh friends who were watching him from outside why, being a Sikh, he acted like that. He told them that when he entered the hall he saw Guru Nanak Sahib physically sitting where the Revered Master was sitting and he could not but prostrate himself before Guru Nanak Sahib. All the time, he told them, he found himself sitting in the presence of Guru Nanak Sahib.”

Question: “Sir, could that be correct?”

Master: “Yes, That is correct. The Revered Master had immense love and respect for the lineage of the Gurus, particularly for Guru Nanak Sahib. When he wanted to push a disciple on the spiritual path, he would pass him to the charge of Guru Nanak Sahib.”

Question: “Sir, by pushing him, do you mean leading him from the stage of *fana-fi-al-Sheikh* to that of *fana-fi-al-Rasool*?”

The Master nodded.

A devotee: “Sir, you, too, have immense love for and faith in the lineage of the Gurus. You arrange *Akhand Path Sahib*¹ regularly. You have got Guru Granth Sahib transcribed in the Sindhi script. Nobody in Sind had done that previously. Then...”

1 uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth Sahib

Master: “Yes. At some stage the Revered Master had assigned me to the care of Guru Nanak Sahib.”

We all became alert at this statement. What we had presumed so far was now evident; the Master had attained *fanai* in Guru Nanak Sahib, too. We became silent.

After a short while, we saw a visitor entering the courtyard. He was followed by three persons. Seeing him, the Master rose, went forward and greeted him with folded hands. We, too, went forward and bowed to that person. The Master offered him a chair by his side. The visitor spoke indistinctly, so he was not clear to us. I was told that he was an ecstatic saint and occasionally visited Kalyan. The Master sent for some refreshment for the saint. While the Master was busy with the saint, we went into the hut. We entered into a discussion on what had just been discussed.

A devotee: “It was a lucky day today. We heard from the Master what was not known to us so far. Though we used to suspect, we were not certain about that. Today, it became clear to us that the Master had attained *fanai* in Guru Nanak Sahib.”

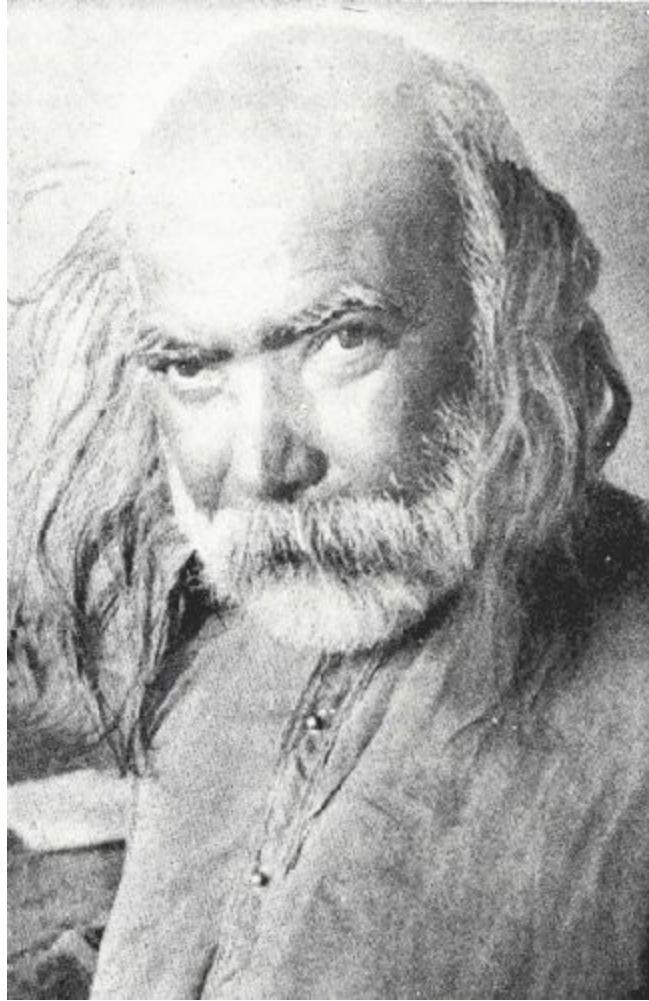
Another devotee: “Having attained that *fanai*, the Master had later attained *fanai* in other incarnations—Sri Krishna, Sri Ramchandra, Lord Buddha and others.”

Another devotee: “The Master had attained *fanai* in Lord Christ also. I have personal evidence for it. Once, when I was about to board a local train in Bombay, I saw a small cross lying at the foot-board. Perhaps someone had dropped it. As it was a sacred object, I picked it, kissed it, cleansed it and put it in my pocket. Coming into the presence of the Master, I told him that I had found a cross and showed it to him. Pleased at it, the Master said, ‘At one time, I had a relationship with Lord Christ, too’. It means that he had attained *fanai* in Lord Christ.”

A devotee: “Yes, you are correct. Sri Ramakrishna, too, had similar experiences. Having once attained *fanai* in Mother Goddess (Mother Kali), he quickly attained *fanai* in other incarnations—Sri Hanuman, Mother Seeta, Sri Ramchandra, Sri Radha, Sri Krishna, Prophet Mohammed, Lord Christ and others. Then he said that Truth is one and sages call it by various names. These examples prove that once a jiva attains subtlety and loses the self, he quickly attains *fanai* of every kind.”

An elderly devotee: “Doctor Sahib is not an ordinary person. He is a great power. This is proved by what an enlightened being like Sai Hadi Baksh had once said of Doctor Sahib. The episode is like this: We, a group of devotees, were sitting in the presence of Sai Hadi Baksh at the Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad (Sind). While discussing spiritual matters, Sai Hadi Baksh said, ‘I shall give credit to one who has attained perfection on both the sides—mundane and spiritual. The example of King Janaka is unique in this regard; he remained unattached (*akarmi*) while he ruled.’ On hearing this, someone said to him, ‘Sir, the examples from the past are commendable, but they do not seem relevant to the present time. Neither the kings are here now, nor are there the styles of rule. Those were the things of the past. Now the times are difficult. Everyone is busy earning his living. How can people attend to both the sides? Can you give an example of someone who, living like King Janaka, has also attained perfection in the mundane life?’ After a silence for a while, Sai Hadi Baksh said, ‘Yes, there is a person. He is Doctor Sahib who has attained to the status of King Janaka.’ We asked him, ‘Sir, on what basis do you say that.’ He replied, ‘I shall give you proof for what I have said. Note the time now. At this moment, Doctor Sahib is sitting in meditation at the cremation ground in Rohri. Write to him and have it verified. If that is correct, assume that what I have said about Doctor Sahib is correct.’ A letter was sent. According to the reply received, the Master had, at that time, gone to the cremation ground to attend a funeral and he was spending time in meditation there.”

Another devotee: “Now I can understand why the Master is excited when he refers to King Janaka.”



Hazrat Sai Hadi Baksh

A devotee: “What you say is fine. I shall tell you something which is not mere hearsay but is what I myself had once experienced. It was in 1932. The Master had gone on a pilgrimage to Badri Nath and Kedarnath with a group of forty devotees. After a journey on foot for some days when we were near Kedar Nath, we learnt that there was another holy spot, Triyugi Narain, very near. Having come there, we did not wish to miss it. On reaching there, we went to a *dharmshala* (rest house). We were allotted three rooms. The women were accommodated in one room and men in another. I fixed a bed for the Master in the third room and also fixed a bed for myself in that room in the direction of the Master’s feet. The Master and I had been in that room hardly for a few minutes when a very strange event occurred. We saw a bright glow in the room and then a brilliant form appeared before us. I got frightened. After a few seconds, the form disappeared. The Master later told

me that Lord Vishnu had appeared before us.”

Another devotee: “That is wonderful. I am reminded of another episode regarding that pilgrimage. It is associated with Sai Hadi Baksh. He was a wonderful saint. Whenever he was in an unusual mood, he would tell us of spiritual secrets, too. This incident is about the same pilgrimage of the Master. While we were sitting in the presence of Sai Hadi Baksh at Hyderabad, he said, ‘I must congratulate the *sangat*. Last night, Doctor Sahib was admitted to the Divine presence and the Lord has granted him the title of *Sri*.’ He called a devotee and dictated to him a letter congratulating Doctor Sahib. On the previous night, Sai Hadi Baksh had composed the following three couplets to congratulate Doctor Sahib:

Getting the title of *Sri*,
Swami is now a jewel.
Death does not reach near him
Who is bestowed grace at Kedarnath.

And

Swami is bestowed love on his pilgrimage,
May the Lord bring him back to us.

And

Neither I nor you,
Neither this nor that,
It is absorption on this path.

These couplets were also included in the letter.”

Question: “That is very good. What does the title of ‘Sri’ signify?”

An elderly devotee: “This title is granted in the Court of the Lord. It is the stage of *fana-fi-Allah* or of *turiya*. The seeker gains realisation at this stage.”

Question: “Does it mean that the Master has actually sacrificed his head?”

Elderly devotee: “It happened like this. After visiting Kedarnath, when we approached Badri Nath, another miracle occurred. The Master had the vision of Lord Vishnu once again. On this occasion, Lord Vishnu, appearing before the Master said, ‘I have come to ask for your head’. The Master submitted, ‘Yes Lord, I am ready.’ Giving him a sword the Lord said, ‘Take this and cut

off your head.’ The Master took the sword from the Lord and was about to use it when the Revered Master appeared there and signaled to him to stop. With folded hands, the Revered Master submitted to Lord Vishnu, ‘My Lord, we have yet to take much work in the world from this child. He may kindly be excused.’ The Lord smiled and said to the Master. ‘All right, your head is accepted. You may give some blood instead.’ The Master then made a cut on his finger and presented the blood to the Lord.

“The proof of the acceptance of the blood was that the Master soon developed severe eczema and suffered from it for some months.

“Later the Master gave an account of this event in a letter to Sai Hadi Baksh. Fortunately, I happened to be present when the letter was received by him. He gave me the letter to read.”

Question: “Brother, all these visions must be the result of some endeavours and efforts. What are these endeavours?”

Elderly devotee: “These are earned as a result of the endeavours of *fanais*. These indicate the stage of *fanai* attained. The Master first had *fanai* in his satguru the Revered Master, Sai Qutab Ali Shah Sahib. This is called *fana-fi-al-Sheikh*. Thereafter the Revered Master assigned him to the care of Guru Nanak Sahib. This is the stage of *fana-fi-al-Rasool*.”

As the elderly devotee was talking to us, we received the word that the ecstatic fakir had left and that the Master was free. We came into the presence of the Master.

The Master asked us a question.

Master: “How did you engage yourselves?”

Elderly devotee: “Sir, we were talking about the kinds of *fanai* and the visions of Lord Vishnu you had during your visits to Badri Nath and Kedar Nath.”

Master: “Infinite has been the grace of the Lord on me. I cannot describe it. He has appeared before me quite often and has graced me.

“Once He appeared at my house in Rohri. It was a summer noon. We were sitting in the outer room of our house. Suddenly, a sadhu entered the room and asked for a glass of cold water to drink. At that time, my son Hari was by my side. Initially, I did not recognise the sadhu. But looking at him more carefully, I soon realised that He was Lord Vishnu in the guise of the sadhu. I paid due obeisance to Him. At that time, I had some difficulty in my practice. By the grace of my satguru, He had appeared to help me in my difficulty. These discussions are good.

Either a vision of the beloved,
Or a talk about the beloved,
May the Lord not deprive us
Of these two things.

“But we must now engage ourselves in actual practice and be on the march. Time is passing. We must think of *fanai* and practise in that direction. One must have courage and attain absorption. One must annihilate the self, get lost in the precept of the guru and attain a *fanai*. There lies the salvation.”

The Master became quiet. Then a devotee sang a song:

My mind is divested
Of all ego feelings,
The strings within are moved,
Music is produced within,
I lost taste for the world
As I attained the vision within.
The blaze of love has arisen,
I am caught in the flames.
The ego within is burnt,
I am saved from the suffering,
My mind is fully absorbed
In the precept of the satguru.
I attained the realisation,
Man is the secret¹ of the Lord.
Contemplate God always,
And carry the cross,
Taking the path of negation,
Annihilate the ego.
You are truly a lion;
Abandon the illusion of the sheep,
Peep deep within, O Qutab,²
And thus realise the Self.

1 *al insan sri*

2 name of the poet, the Revered Master.

MEETING 33

RENUNCIATION AND NON-ATTACHMENT

(Tyag aur Vairagya)

SHANTI NAGAR 16 May, 1956

After the reading from Sri Yoga Vasishtha was over in the satsang, someone put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, I have difficulty in understanding the distinction between the two terms, renunciation (*tyag*) and non-attachment (*vairagya*), frequently used in the episode of Queen Chudala and King Sikhidhwaja in Sri Yoga Vasishtha. Between renunciation and non-attachment, which one has to be attained first?”

Master: “You have raised a very good question. Renunciation means the tendency to forgo—to give up material things and to sacrifice. When the tendency to renounce becomes strong, the jiva loses taste for material goods. Loss of taste or loss of inclination for material goals is called dispassion or non-attachment (*vairagya*). Renunciation precedes non-attachment.”

Question: “Sir, how is that possible? How can a jiva renounce in the absence of non-attachment? He can renounce only if he loses taste for material goods. Does it not imply that renunciation follows non-attachment?”

Master: “No, it is not so. You say that dispassion or non-attachment should come first. But how will it arise? Non-attachment (*vairagya*) is not easily attained. It arises after certain conditions are fulfilled or when certain qualities are developed in a jiva. What are these qualities? There are various aspects of renunciation. Let a jiva first learn to sacrifice. Let him train himself in it.

“He should first learn to sacrifice small things, such as:

<i>Sacrifice of the tongue:</i>	to forgo taste and to give up unnecessary speaking and talking;
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<i>Sacrifice of the eyes:</i>	not to see movies etc;
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<i>Sacrifice of the ears:</i>	not to hear ill of others;
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Sacrifice of the feet:

not to go to useless places but to go to satsang;

Sacrifice of the hands:

not to beat anybody but to use the hands for charity and giving alms.

Likewise, he has to learn the sacrifice of the other senses. As he practises these things, he develops, in due course, distaste for or disinterest in material goods and pleasures; and then vairagya (non-attachment) arises in him.”

Question: “Sir, you say that *vairagya* (non-attachment) follows *tyag* (renunciation) and not otherwise. But in some cases we have seen vairagya directly arising in the absence of tyag (renunciation). How does that happen? We know that some saints had the attitude of vairagya since their early years.”

A devotee: “Sir, let us not go very far. We had the example of Bhai Gobindram Sahib in our circle; he was a co-disciple of the Master. I, too, had spent some time with him. He had the spirit of vairagya since his childhood. He undertook very hard spiritual practices in his childhood. Even at that early age he used to live in strict seclusion (practice of *goshe nashini*) and with vairagya. He was, as it were, vairagya personified.”

Master: “You are right. There are instances of some lucky beings in whom vairagya had manifested since their childhood, as if they had possessed vairagya since birth. But these people must have practised tyag (renunciation) in their earlier births, which has given rise to vairagya in the present birth. The folk did not see their endeavours in the previous birth(s). What they see now is the spirit of vairagya in them, as if it arose in them all of a sudden, but it is not true. Non-attachment (vairagya) follows renunciation (tyag). Bhai Gobindram Sahib also had practised renunciation throughout his life. He renounced marriage, wealth, comforts, luxuries and other things.

“Renunciation is necessary for householders and vairagya is necessary for the recluse (*sanyasi*). Whereas the householders attain vairagya after they have practised renunciation, the recluse start with vairagya because they had practised renunciation in their earlier births. Therefore, tyag (renunciation) comes first and then comes vairagya.”

Question: “Sir, you had suggested renunciation of the tongue, the eyes, the ears, etc, as the pre-requisites for the development of vairagya. Is the pattern of renunciation uniform for all, or does it vary under different conditions?”

Master: “I have just given some examples. There cannot be a uniform pattern of sacrifice for all. It varies with the temperament and the age of a

jiva. The patterns of renunciation are different in childhood, adulthood and old age. Also, there are different requirements for jivas in *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. On the spiritual path, one has to eventually renounce renunciation, so that there is no ideation of renunciation within. Much is required beyond this if the jiva has to realise the Self. Let us practise renunciation at the lower level before we reach that stage.”

Question: “Sir, what things are to be renounced?”

Master: “Three things must be renounced. These are: wealth, body and mind. Let us begin our consideration with renunciation of the mind.

“Renunciation of the mind envisages non-arousal of ideation (*sankalpa*) within. Among the various kinds of ideations, the arousal of the ego is the most potent and it should not be allowed at all. One must remain ever absorbed in the precept of the satguru.

“Renunciation of the body envisages abandoning interest in one’s body. The jiva must remain engaged in the service of others—of saints, parents, sick people, etc.

“Renunciation of the wealth envisages the practice of charity etc. All religions ordain the practice of charity. The Gurus have ordained the use of one-tenth of one’s income in charity. Islam also prescribes the use of a part of one’s income in charity. Other religions, too, give similar instructions.”

A devotee: “Sir, I am reminded of an episode in this context. Once a poor Muslim fellow came to Sai Hadi Baksh with a gift of a bundle of the roots of a tree that are used for brushing the teeth. These are supposed to be good for the health of the gums. No sooner had he placed the bundle before Sai Hadi Baksh than there came a rich man who placed before Sai Hadi Baksh a pack of currency notes worth fifty rupees. Sai Hadi Baksh immediately got busy talking to the rich man while the poor man sat in a corner watching their discussion. He was unhappy because Sai Hadi Baksh did not talk to him first. When the rich man left, the poor fellow complained to Sai Hadi Baksh that because he had brought a poor gift, he did not talk to him but talked to the man who had presented a big sum of money to him. Sai Hadi Baksh said to him, ‘Whereas you have brought the roots of a plant, the other person has brought the roots of his heart. Did he not deserve due consideration for that?’ (*laughter*).

Another devotee: “Yes, sir. To part with money is as good as pulling out the roots of the heart.” (*more laughter*)

Master: “Yes, that is a kind of renunciation. Many people who have wealth

do not give money in charity.”

Question: “Sir, people arrange worship of different kinds: *Path*¹ (recitation of scriptures), *Havan* (sacrificial worship with fire), etc. Do all these come under the category of renunciation?”

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Master: “Of course, yes.”

A devotee: “Sir, people do these things with ulterior motives, and not with the spirit of sacrifice. They organise the rites for the attainment of some goals or objects.”

Master: “We accept that people do have ulterior motives while organising these things, yet some sacrifice is involved in these acts. They sacrifice money and forgo some comforts. Arn’t these the cases of sacrifice? These are not small acts. *Path* (reading of scriptures with certain rites) and worship (*pooja*) are highly commendable.”

Question: “Sir, what is the importance of *path* and *pooja*? Kindly explain in detail.”

Master: “*Havan* (sacrificial rites with fire) or recitation of a mantra is an invitation to *devatas* (gods). Coming there, they partake of the offerings and oblations in a subtle manner. When they are satiated, they give blessings. The fumes arising from the sacrificial fire purify the atmosphere. I like *havan* very much. At Karachi, I used to arrange *havan* at my house once or twice a week. Here, too, we organise it quite frequently.”

Question: “Sir, do celestial beings always come to the *havan*?”

Master: “Scriptures say that if a *havan* is organised methodically and with purity, the celestial beings do come there.”

Question: “Sir, how do we know that they are present at *havan* and have partaken of the offerings and are pleased?”

Master: “They are the inhabitants of the subtle plane and can be seen only with the subtle vision. If we develop subtle vision we can see them. There are also some manifest indications of their arrival to partake of the offerings. But we need an expert priest who is thorough in the procedures and methodology.

“Once I had organised *havan* in Karachi as an offering to the Mother Goddess. While we were putting the offerings in the sacrificial fire, my son Hari asked the priest to show some evidence that the oblation had been

accepted by the Mother and that She had been pleased. The priest replied in the affirmative and continued to recite the *mantras*. As we continued with our offerings in the sacrificial fire, a strong flame arose from the fire-pot (*havan kund*), went up in the air and landed on my shirt. It remained there for some seconds, rose up again in the air, and went back in the fire-pot and merged in fire. Everyone around me got scared and shouted ‘fire, fire’, and ran to a safe distance. They then came forward to examine my shirt to see if anything had happened. The fire had left no trace, there was no burn or scar on my shirt. If we take into consideration the duration for which the flame remained on my shirt, the shirt should have got burnt. The brahmin told us that that was the evidence given by the Mother that She was present there and that She had accepted our oblations. That was Her glamorous (*tejaswi*) form. All brahmins cannot achieve that. The *mantras* have immense power; one has only to know them rightly.”

Question: “Sir, could you kindly tell us the significance of *path*?”

Master: “Yes, *path*, too, is of great significance, provided it is done according to rules and with devotion and reverence. A jiva can get blessings through it too.”

Question: “Sir, you say that there are rules for the *path*. What are those rules?”

Master: “*Akhand Path Sahib*¹ is of the supreme status and I will tell you the rules with regard to this. These rules also apply in varying degrees to the reading of other scriptures. The rules for *Akhand Path Sahib* are:

¹ uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth Sahib

(i) “*Akhand Vani (Uninterrupted Reading)*: There should be no break or interruption in the reading (of Guru Granth Sahib) from the beginning to the end.”

Question: “Sir, what should be the style of reading? Should it be silent reading in the mind without the movement of the lips, or should it be low reading where the movement of the lips is there but the reading is not audible to others, or should it be very clear and loud reading?”

Master: “None else is benefited if the reading is silent or inaudible. I always appreciate clear and loud reading. When I arrange *Path Sahib*, I select only such readers (*pathis*) who agree to reading aloud, are well trained and can

recite in a pleasing and sweet manner. I like loud reading because the audience must be benefited by that. If fortunately anyone in the audience assimilates a word and undergoes transformation, the reading is fruitful. How can such benefits accrue if it is not a loud reading? I like that there should be some person(s) in audience all the time—may be in turns—when the reading is in progress.

“It must also be understood that while the reading (*vani*) is in progress, the Guru is present there in His subtle form. *Vani* is His subtle form. It has been recorded:

*Vani Guru hai, Guru hai vani,
Vich vani hai amrit sare.
(The holy words are the Guru,
The Guru is the holy words,
The holy words contain all the nectars)*

Should it not be necessary for us to be present where Guru is? *Vani* is highly potent and when it is loudly recited, the atmosphere is purified. These are great things.

(ii) “*Akhand Jyoti*: A flame (*jyoti*) should be kept burning continually throughout the duration of the reading (*Path Sahib*); it should not be extinguished at any stage. Atma is ever luminous, and is of the nature of light (*jyoti*). Light symbolises Atma and is the evidence of the presence of the Guru.

(iii) “*Akhand Langar* (uninterrupted serving of food): Whoever comes there must eat or partake of something. One may feed according to one’s capacity; it may be very simple food, but none should be allowed to go away without taking something. Those who are well-to-do must keep feeding continually day and night for the duration of *Path Sahib*. Whoever eats will give blessings. One must earn blessings from all—his satguru, parents, friends, neighbours, beasts and insects, because God permeates all. Being omnipresent, He is present in all forms. One does not know when and in what form He may be pleased. A jiva must strive hard in his endeavours. God can be realised through blessings, too. This is one way to attain to Him.

“A jiva must practise the kind of renunciation that is appropriate to his existing position or attribute (*sattva, rajas, tamas*). He must renounce what he owns. He must renounce wealth, body and mind. The renunciation of the

mind or chitta is the supreme renunciation.”

Question: “Sir, if renunciation of the mind is the supreme renunciation, why do you advise renunciation of the wealth?” (*laughter*)

Master (*with a smile*): “It is very difficult to renounce wealth or material goods. To say that if the mind has been renounced, there is no need to renounce wealth or material goods is trying to be clever. The mind is already attached to wealth and material goods; it is very difficult to renounce the mind alone. It is very difficult to give up attachments and abandon the ego. It is essential to undertake renunciation of the material wealth. If a jiva does not do so he is apt to cheat himself with the false reasoning that having undertaken the bigger renunciation, he could ignore the smaller renunciation. If a jiva owns material wealth, he must renounce it. If he renounces both—the wealth and the mind—that is excellent; but renunciation of the wealth is essential in any event. A jiva must renounce what he has.

“Renunciation is the central idea of the Gita. Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to renounce the idea that the Kauravas are his relatives, that he could not kill his relatives and that he would incur sin if he killed his relatives. He asks Arjuna not to abandon duty under the influence of attachments. In the context of Atma, no one dies; Atma is immortal.

Ignore what is seen,
Remember what is unseen.

Renunciation is the fundamental idea of the Gita. In the ultimate analysis, the Gita says that a jiva must abandon the self and realise the Self (God, Truth, the Absolute, Haq). This cannot be attained in the absence of vairagya (non-attachment); and non-attachment does not arise in the absence of renunciation.

“Tyag (renunciation) is the life-belt that helps a jiva to cross the ocean of the world, and he who uses it is not affected by the waves of any kind arising in the ocean. He is not drowned; he swims across.”

Question: “Sir, you have explained how tyag (renunciation) is an essential prerequisite for the growth of vairagya. But why is vairagya necessary?”

Master: “One cannot succeed on any path (*marg*)—karma marg, bhakti marg and gyan marg—in the absence of vairagya. So, vairagya is essential on all the three paths. According to Sri Yoga Vasishtha, karma marg envisages practice (abhyas) and non-attachment (vairagya), bhakti marg envisages

discrimination (*vivek*) and non-attachment and gyan marg envisages contemplation (*vichar*) and non-attachment. Non-attachment (*vairagya*) is an essential element on all the paths. A jiva can progress in the direction of Allah only when he is detached from the world. Non-attachment (*vairagya*) alone helps him withdraw his thoughts from the world.”

Question: “Sir, it indicates that, besides renunciation, one has to maintain a particular attitude or a way of thinking (*vrutti*) so that *vairagya* may arise. Kindly explain what these attitudes or ways of thinking (*vrutti*) are.”

Master: “There are two kinds of attitude which, if they are maintained along with the practice of renunciation, lead to the growth of non-attachment (*vairagya*). These are: the attitude of contemplation (*vichar vrutti*) and the attitude of love or devotion (*premavritti*). The attitude of love envisages that everything belongs to the beloved and nothing belongs to ‘me’. ‘I’, too, belong to the beloved. This is the way or the attitude of the lovers, or of those who are on the path of love (*bhakti marg*). The other disposition is that everything is ephemeral, illusory and unreal and must be renounced, and that which is real must be accepted. Regulating his thought process in this manner, a jiva, who practises like this, attains such firmness or force in his disposition that he develops distaste for the worldly objects. Thus he attains *vairagya* or non-attachment. Generally, a recluse or *sanyasi* follows this path. This is *gyan marg* or the path of contemplation.”

Question: “Sir, are there different kinds of *vairagya*?”

Master: “There are two kinds of *vairagya*—firm *vairagya* and temporary or momentary *vairagya*. Firm *vairagya* is the true *vairagya*; the other one is a passing event like the glow of lightning. When a jiva is displeased with his wife, family or job, or when he loses a dear one, he might experience *vairagya* for a while; it is not lasting. It comes and disappears. Here, I am reminded of an episode from the life of Sant Kabir Sahib.

“Once a person came from a long distance to see Sant Kabir. When he knocked at his door, Mai Loi, wife of Sant Kabir told him that Sant Kabir had gone to mix clay with clay. The visitor was confounded; he could not follow what she was saying. He asked for clarification. She told him that Kabir Sahib had gone to the cremation ground to attend a funeral. The visitor had come from a long distance and was very eager to meet Kabir Sahib, so he asked her about the identification marks of Kabir Sahib so that he could locate him at the cremation ground. She told him that Kabir Sahib had a peacock feather (*kalgi*) on his head. The visitor went to the cremation ground.

On reaching there, he was surprised to find everyone having a peacock feather (*kalgi*) on his head. He got confused. After some time the people started going out. As they left the cremation ground, the peacock feathers on their heads disappeared except in the case of one person. Assuming that he was Kabir Sahib, the visitor prostrated himself before him and asked him to explain the phenomenon he had just witnessed. Kabir Sahib told him that when people come to the cremation ground they forget the world for a while and they remember death. Vairagya arises in them; hence *kalgis* appear on their heads. But no sooner do they leave the place than they forget death and *kalgis* disappear. But the saints who ever remember death, always have *kalgis* on their heads.

“The other attitude is the attitude of love. One renounces for the sake of the beloved, or one remembers the beloved while renouncing. As a jiva continually acts in this manner, the attitude of devotion is strengthened and love arises in him and thus vairagya develops in him. When love arises in a jiva, many other good qualities—including vairagya—arise in him. Thereafter he likes nothing except the beloved. He withdraws his thoughts or mind from everything else. By virtue of the love developed within, vairagya arises naturally in him; he, unlike a sanyasi, makes no effort for it. A sanyasi, however, endeavours for vairagya. In olden times, the conquest of hunger, thirst, sleep, taste, etc by different methods were stressed for attaining vairagya. Now that the life span is short, vairagya through love is generally recommended.

“So, there are two dispositions leading to the growth of vairagya—the disposition of contemplation or gyan and the disposition of love or devotion (bhakti).”

Question: “Sir, now I follow that there are two dispositions leading to vairagya and that one must practise renunciation until one attains vairagya. Am I correct?”

Master: “That is right. A jiva must renounce according to the stage where he is presently placed. Let him renounce what he owns.”

Question: “Sir, why is it that at times one is able to do great things under an impulse of the mind, and at other times one gets stuck with very small obstacles?”

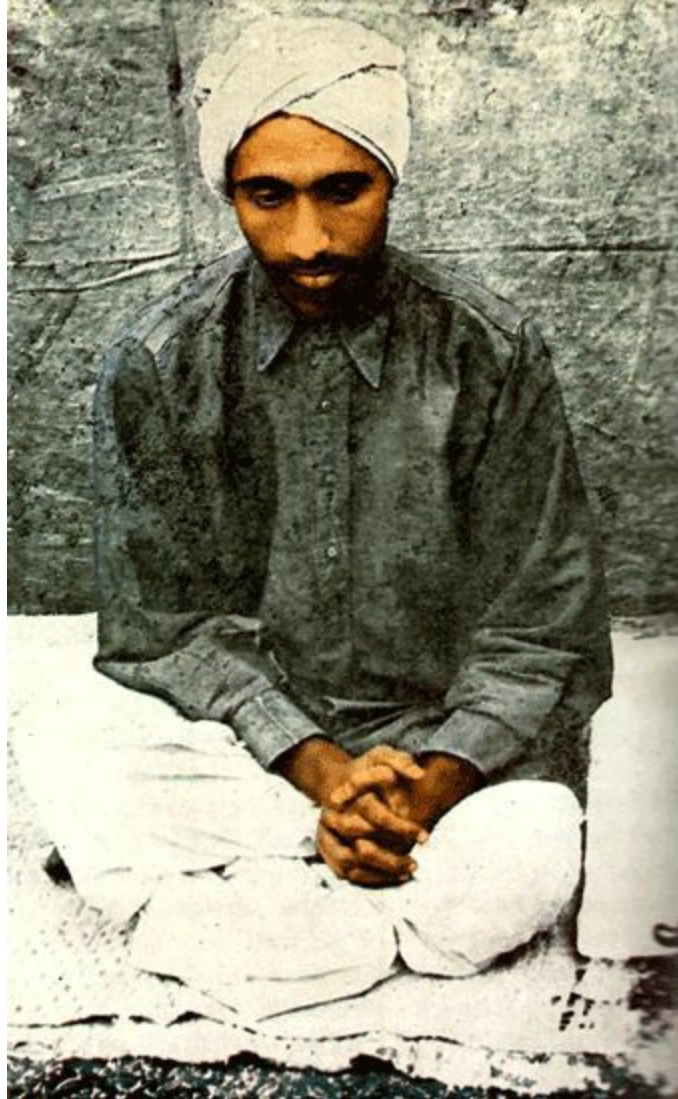
Master: “The universe is *triguni maya*—the play of three forces of nature. At times the forces of *sattva* are operative and at other times the forces of *rajas* or *tamas* are operative. The temperament of a jiva varies according to the

force dominating at a time. So, at times he crosses rivers and at times he is held up in small channels. Fakirs cultivate some habits of good actions to overcome this difficulty. One continues to work under the force of the habits and does not stop even if the other forces are in operation. Therefore, a jiva must train himself in renunciation from childhood and this attitude would persist in him in a natural manner irrespective of the unfavourable conditions facing him.

“When my son Hari was at school, I used to give him two pocketfuls of pistachio¹ for his own consumption as well as to share it with others. I used to give him two pens or pencils—one for his own use and the other for a classmate who might have forgotten to bring his own. It is a training in renunciation in childhood. One has to learn to renounce what one considers one’s own. A jiva who is habituated to renunciation from childhood, continues with that habit when he grows up. (*looking at the clock*) It is 6:30. We may stop the satsang here.”

¹ In those days pistachio was very cheap in that area.

A devotee: “Sir, we may stop the usual satsang here. But today there was a reference to Bhai Gobindram Sahib. Many of us do not know much about him. Fortunately, we have an elderly friend among us who had spent some time with Bhai Gobindram Sahib. Could you kindly ask him to tell us about Bhai Gobindram Sahib. We shall be benefited.”



Bhai Gobindram Sahib

Master (*addressing the elderly devotee*): “If you are not tired, please tell them.”

Elderly devotee: “As you order me, sir.”

Master: “That is good. In the meantime I will go to the residential barrack.”

The master went out and the elderly devotee gave a brief account of the life of Bhai Gobindram Sahib, which follows.

Life of Bhai Gobindram Sahib

The moths resolved,
And gathered round the flame.
Fearing not the flame,
They plunged into the fire.
They cared not for their heads,
And decided to lose.

And

Ask the moths
About the taste of burning,
They come flying
And plunge into the flame.
How can they resist
Who are love-stricken?

The above two couplets by Shah Abdul Latif fully apply to Bhai Gobindram Sahib. His master had ignited such a powerful spark right on the first day (of initiation) that it instantly burst into a fire. Like a moth, Bhai Gobindram could not resist plunging into it. The spark of the *shabd* had struck him in such a way that powerful flames of love arose within him and he could not save his head. He fully sacrificed himself for the beloved (satguru). Plunging himself into the fire of love he united himself with the Truth. He left his mortal frame in the prime of youth.

His life was an example of unceasing endeavour and total dedication. He strove day and night with no other consideration. Sitting with his back to the wall, he constantly remained busy in his practice. Sleep was unknown to him. He had adopted a very dangerous method to lose sleep by selecting a spot by the side of a railway track where he used to sit in his practice. If he felt sleepy, he would place his head on the rails and then invite sleep if it dared to come near him. If he got sleep and a train passed, all would be over. So, sleep dared not approach him. He had frightened it away. He always remained busy in his practice. The room where he lived had two doors. Putting a lock on one door from outside, he would close the other door from inside and keep himself locked inside giving an impression that no one was in the room. Thus, he would remain engaged in uninterrupted practice. He did not allow anyone to come close to him, except two or three close friends. If anyone at

all approached him in connection with some work, he would politely request him to withdraw. He desired nothing but his beloved (satguru).

Once, some police cops came there in search of a washer man who lived near Bhai Sahib's house and was involved in a theft. The washer man was not in his house when the cops arrived. Incidentally, the door of Bhai Sahib's room was open at that time, as one of his friends who had come to see him had just left. Finding the door open, the cops entered the room to spend time until the washer man returned to his house. They talked of all sorts of things among themselves. But Bhai Sahib remained quiet throughout. As the washer man did not return for about two hours, the cops decided to leave. While leaving, the police inspector said to Bhai Sahib, "We have been here for two hours but nobody came to you. Don't you feel lonely and bored?" Bhai Sahib replied, "Inspector Sahib, you made me lonely, otherwise I do not remain like that." Surprised, the inspector said, "How is that? Rather we entertained you with our gossip and talk." Repeating his earlier reply Bhai Sahib said, "What I told you is true." Realising his mistake the inspector said, "Excuse me, sir. We disturbed you in your meditation. You would have otherwise remained busy with Allah. Kindly forgive us." Saluting Bhai Sahib, he withdrew with his men.

Bhai Sahib did not like anything except meditation. He always wore a very simple shirt, a dhoti and a turban. He had no taste for food and took only one simple meal in a day. At times, he would miss that, too. He would, in that case, send it back, or give it to birds, or keep it aside where it got dried. At times he used to withdraw into the forest or to the hills for days together. On return, he would eat those dry pieces of loaf when he felt hungry. He was always on the move on the spiritual path.

Burn yourself as long as you live,
Nothing but burning helps,
Must march in all seasons,
There is no time for respite.

Bhai Sahib personified the above couplet by Shah Sahib.

Bhai Sahib was born in 1886 at Rohri (Sind). His father, Gyan Chand, used to sell milk and milk products. He had two sons—Lalchand and Jethamal (called Gobindram later on).

When Bhai Sahib was about six years old, he was sent for education to the

ashram of Shri Amolakram who was a learned and pious person. By listening to the spiritual talks, Bhai Sahib imbibed spiritual tendencies. He remained there for about five years.

When he was about eleven years of age, his father asked him to help him in the work at the shop. But Bhai Sahib could not apply his mind to the work at the shop. He hated telling lies. When someone asked him if the milk or the butter at his shop was pure, he would reply in the negative. The customers were happy with his truthful statements but it adversely affected the sale. His father tried to explain it to him, but he refused to listen. He asked his father, “Who would reply on my behalf in the Court of the Lord?” Whenever a beggar or a sadhu came to the shop, he would give him something free to eat. His father withdrew him from the shop and allotted him a room above the shop where he could remain in meditation. That was exactly what Bhai Sahib wanted.

His tendency for vairagya grew further in the atmosphere of solitude. Providentially he came into contact with a sadhu who helped him to study spiritual texts—*Vivek Chudamani* by Sri Adi Shankracharya and *Vairagya Shatak* by Bhartrihari. He already had a tendency for vairagya and lived in an atmosphere of solitude and now he got the company of a recluse (sadhu) and was made to study spiritual texts especially devoted to vairagya. The combined effect of all these factors was that the tendency for vairagya burst out like a blaze in him. Everything appeared insipid and unreal to him. But he did not know what Truth is and how it could be realised. He then felt the need for a guru—the wise who would lead him on the spiritual path. He wandered from place to place and visited some dargahs in search of a guru. Restlessness grew further in him. A slight stimulus like a devotional song or the tune of *shehnai* would instantly bring tears to his eyes. Seeing his state, his father became extremely anxious and puzzled. Unable to think of any solution, he proposed to get his son married so that he would be busy with a companion and a family. But Bhai Sahib rejected the proposal outright. When his father pressed him further, he replied that in that event he would run away into the forests. Realising his helplessness, his father stopped pressing him any more.

As time passed, the urge for a guru became more and more intense. There were fakirs in the town, but none could arouse the faith of a satguru in him. He had heard of Sri Kalachand and went to Hyderabad (Sind) to meet him. There, when he enquired of someone about the residence of Sri Kalachand,

that man asked him about the purpose of his visit to Sri Kalachand. Bhai Sahib told him his purpose. The man then suggested to Bhai Sahib to visit first the great Sufi saint Hazrat Sai Qutab Ali Shah who lived near Hyderabad and whom he considered the greatest living saint in that area. Bhai Sahib accepted the suggestion and went there the next day. On seeing the Revered Master (Sai Qutab Ali Shah) Bhai Sahib was overwhelmed with emotion and instantly lost his heart to him. He felt that he had met the sage he had been seeking. When the Revered Master enquired of his name, Bhai Sahib said, "Sir, my name is Jetha." The Revered Master said to him, "No, we shall call you Gobind Baksh¹." Then Bhai Sahib requested him for initiation. Seeing his spirit of vairagya the Revered Master said, "We shall share a lot with you." He then initiated him and put him on the spiritual path. He graced him so much that from then onwards Bhai Sahib was always on the march; he remained busy in his pursuit day in and day out. After a stay of about two months, the Revered Master permitted him to leave the place and said to him, "You may now go anywhere you like. The Fakir is always with you. But, mind you, never keep company with the rich." Bhai Sahib fully adhered to these instructions. He had a few friends who were poor.

¹ Henceforth Bhai Sahib was called Gobindram.

He came in contact with Doctor Sahib at the Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad. Though they both hailed from the same town (Rohri), they had not met each other before. Now that they became co-disciples, they developed an intense bond of love between themselves.

When Bhai Sahib returned to Rohri, he could not get rest at his home. Seeing this, Doctor Sahib offered him a room above his dispensary. Confining himself in that room, Bhai Sahib engaged himself in an intense practice. After a few months, he felt an urge to see his satguru, the Revered Master, and left for Hyderabad. The train arrived there at midnight. Not engaging a carriage, he started for Dargah Sahib on foot. On the way he had to pass through army barracks. And movement through the army barracks was forbidden at night those days. Not knowing this, he walked into the army area. The dogs in the barracks started barking at him. But he was so much absorbed in meditation on the way that he paid no attention to the dogs and went on. A British soldier called from a distance, "Who comes there?" But

Bhai Sahib was not aware either of the dogs or of the call given by the soldier. Not having got a response to his call, the soldier fired at Bhai Sahib. The shot missed him but it hit a dog which died instantly. The other dogs ran away. The soldier was amazed at what had happened and how Bhai Sahib was moving ahead without being aware of anything around him. Having crossed the army barracks, Bhai Sahib arrived in the presence of his satguru. The Revered Master said to him, 'Fakir is responsible for everything that happens, no matter if the guns are fired.' Bhai Sahib, however, could not follow the reference to the gun-fire. Two persons, who were sitting at a little distance away in the army area and had watched the incident of the previous night, reported the happening at Dargah Sahib the next morning. Then everyone there realised what a grave situation had arisen and how the fakir had looked after the safety of his disciple.

Bhai Sahib lost his mother in his early years and was brought up with great affection by his father. The father was, therefore, specially attached to his children. He could not reconcile himself to the idea that his son should remain unmarried. When he learnt that his son had gone to Dargah Sahib at Hyderabad, he went there to bring pressure on him, through the Revered Master, to agree to the proposal for his marriage so that he could live like others in the world. The Revered Master told him not to press him for that because Bhai Sahib was destined to live the life of a yogi and in case he was forced to marry he would be lost both to his father and to him (the Revered Master). The father returned home disappointed.

It was not easy for the father to suppress his love and attachment. He then proposed to build a small house for Bhai Sahib where he could stay, instead of living in a dispensary belonging to someone else. Bhai Sahib agreed to this. Soon a small house was built for him opposite to Doctor Sahib's dispensary. The father asked Bhai Sahib to promise him two things—first, he would visit him occasionally, and, second, he would be by his bedside at the time of his death. Bhai Sahib used to visit his father Gianchand occasionally at night. There was a plague epidemic in Rohri in 1916. Gianchand was one of the victims. He was shifted to the Government Hospital. When someone informed Doctor Sahib about it, he immediately informed Bhai Sahib. The father was pleased to see his son and he breathed his last, his head resting in the lap of Bhai Sahib.

When the Revered Master left his mortal frame in 1910, Bhai Sahib could not stand the separation. He started wandering in secluded places, with tears

flowing from his eyes for his satguru. When Sai Nasir Sahib¹ saw him, he was very much impressed by the fast rate at which he had progressed.

¹ a well-known Sufi saint of high rank in Sind

Bhai Sahib had a special liking for the scripture Sri Yoga Vasishtha. But he never read it from cover to cover. He would just open it at random, read a paragraph here or there and get absorbed in it and start weeping. Once a friend came there to read some scripture to him. The narration was about Lord Krishna and his friend, Sudama, and it related how Lord Krishna ran barefoot to meet Sudama and hugged him. At that time something unusual happened to Bhai Sahib and he wept so intensely and for so long that the person who had come to read was greatly embarrassed.

People with anguish and love are highly compassionate. They cannot stand the sufferings of others. Once, a man came to Bhai Sahib to seek his advice about his brother who was on the death-bed and about whom doctors had given up hope. The man asked Bhai Sahib if the opinion of doctors was correct. Initially, Bhai Sahib put him off saying that he was not God. The man, however, insisted and said, “Sir, I have only heard about God, but I am actually seeing you and you are everything for me. I am just making a small request to enquire about my brother. Kindly do help me.” Remaining quiet for a while, Bhai Sahib said to him, “Yes, what the doctors say is correct. Please serve your brother as much as you can.” Having said so, Bhai Sahib closed his eyes and sat in meditation. The man could not restrain himself. He brought a cup of water and with tearful eyes requested Bhai Sahib to touch it so that he might then serve it to his brother. As Bhai Sahib opened his eyes, he was moved by the tears flowing down the cheeks of that man and he said to him, “Dear, you asked me to tell you the truth. Now what have you done? You have started weeping.” The man replied, “Sir, he is my brother after all.” At this, Bhai Sahib, too, burst into tears. He took the cup from him and gave it back to him saying, “Dear, I ought not to have done it. All right, have patience. Serve this cup to your brother and God will do all good.” The man went home and served the cup to his dying brother and he recovered very soon.

As a result of his intense endeavours and austerities, Bhai Sahib became very weak and consequently he fell ill. No treatment was of any use. When

someone requested him to suspend pranayama for some days until his health improved and he gained strength, Bhai Sahib said to him, “Being a pious person yourself and a devotee of a great saint, how do you advise me like that? How far can one depend upon one’s breath? The body is transient and perishable. How can I give up my practice?”

The Holi festival was approaching. Some of his friends suggested to him to try some other doctors. He replied “Let us celebrate Holi and then we shall see.” One of his friends who had his business away from the town sought his permission to go to his work but Bhai Sahib told him to wait until after the Holi festival.

The Holi arrived in about four weeks. A lot of people gathered there. A person who had brought a basketful of garlands proposed to place one garland around Bhai Sahib’s neck. At that time Bhai Sahib was lying in bed, and above him on the wall there were three pictures of saints including that of the Revered Master in the centre. Bhai Sahib asked the person to garland first those pictures and then all those who had gathered there. That man obeyed him and then he proceeded to garland Bhai Sahib. Once again, Bhai Sahib asked him to wait. All persons stood quietly in expectation of instructions from him. In a few minutes, a flower from the garland on the central picture (of the Revered Master) dropped on the chest of Bhai Sahib. Bhai Sahib said, “Look, I have received a garland.” Then he kissed the flower and placed it on his head. Many around him could not understand the significance of this happening.

Next day was the main Holi festival (Dulhendi). Bhai Sahib’s condition became worse. At about 3:45 p.m. he was made to sit and instantly the light within merged in the Eternal Light. It was 21 March, 1921. Thirty-five years of age, he was still in the prime of youth.

The news of his passing away spread like wild fire. Until then, many people in the town and in the neighbourhood, except a few friends, had not known him because he kept himself in strict seclusion. But the divine fragrance could not remain concealed for too long. People in thousands from the neighbouring towns and villages collected there in no time. Singers, too, came in large numbers. Rose water was continually sprinkled all along the funeral route.

The music was so touching and the atmosphere was so surcharged with pathos that nobody could restrain his tears, as if a hot wind of vairagya were blowing over there. The body was brought to the river bank. It was placed on

a boat and was consigned to the river at a short distance.

The lovers of God, the ones like Bhai Sahib, may appear to be dying physically but in the true sense they are immortal. Spiritually, or in the context of subtlety, they do not die. Sachal Sai has said in a lyric:

Lovers never die,
They remain not in the body,
They drink from the ocean of love,
Their cup filled to the brim.
Absorbed in the Immortal,
They are unattached to the world.
Surrendering their heads,
They remain immortal in the Infinite.
Being always in silence,
They remain in the divine bliss.

At that time, Sai Roshan Ali Shah, who was the *sajjadah nashin* (spiritual successor to Sai Qutab Ali Shah) at the Dargah Sahib in Hyderabad, sent word to Doctor Sahib that the seat of Bhai Gobindram Sahib was not to be left vacant and that he (Doctor Sahib) should be consecrated to that seat (*gaddi*). In his reply, Doctor Sahib told Sai Roshan Ali Shah that he was an insignificant being and was unfit to wear the ochre clothes, so he might be excused. Shortly afterwards, Doctor Sahib had to go to Sewhan to attend the annual *urs* (festival) of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. There he received the divine command which said, “Assume that seat. Thereafter it is our responsibility.”

Doctor Sahib was formally consecrated on the day of the Holi festival the next year, that is, on the first death anniversary of Bhai Sahib. Since then the death anniversary of Bhai Sahib has been celebrated here as an important event every year. On that day the ceremony of *Dastarband* is performed with great devotion and fervour. Doctor Sahib is ceremoniously tied a turban of ochre cloth and there is continuous devotional music and prayers for three days.

MEETING 34

IF YOU LEARNT TO LOVE -1

BRINDABAN 23 August, 1952

Today we, a group of ten persons, left Delhi by two cars, for the holy city of Brindaban. The group included some ladies. A friend from Brindaban had requested the Master to visit that place before leaving Delhi for Bombay. He had been associated with the Master for some years. Though he was a disciple of another saint, yet he had immense affection for the Master. Whenever an invitation was sent to him for any function, he would instantly come over. He was a good singer. When he sat with a group of singers, he infused life in them.

We reached Brindaban at 10 a.m. after a journey of three and a half hours and came to stay at the Sindhi Dharmshala (rest-house). On arriving there, the Master said to us, “We have come to the city of the Incarnation of Love. We must not spend our time on anything except seeing Him and talking about Him. A famous temple of Lord Krishna is nearby. Now it might be the time for prayer (*arati*) there. Please go and visit that temple.”

We hurried to that place and reached there in about three minutes. We were told that it was the temple of Banke Bihari¹ and was one of the old temples. We purchased flowers and handed them over to a priest for oblation before the deity. Devotees were not allowed to enter the room where the image was installed. The door to the room was covered with a curtain, which was removed only at the time of the worship (*arati*). Soon, there were sounds of gongs, cymbals, conchs, etc, indicating that the worship was about to start. The curtain was removed and we had a look at the image of the deity. To our surprise, the curtain did not remain off for the entire duration of the worship. It was intermittently removed and drawn, so we could not have an uninterrupted view of the image. After the worship was over we enquired why the curtain was intermittently removed and drawn. We were told that the reason for that was as follows.

¹ Banke Bihari is one of the many names of Lord Krishna.

Some years ago a queen from a princely state in India visited the temple. During those days also, devotees were not allowed inside the temple but the door was kept open for the entire duration of the worship (*arati*). There was no curtain and the devotees could have an uninterrupted view of the image. The queen was a very good devotee of Lord Krishna. As the door opened and the worship started, the queen fixed her gaze on the eyes of the image. Soon, there was a movement in the image and it started moving towards the queen. Astonished, the priest looked around and saw the queen having her gaze fixed on the image. Instantly he shut the door. Since then the door has been curtained and the curtain is intermittently removed and drawn so that no one fixes his gaze on the image. It was a live image with a great potency and was not like ordinary images. Hence the fame of the temple.

As we returned to the *dharmshala*, the Master asked us if we could see the image. We replied in the affirmative, took seats opposite to him and remained there quietly. Then, someone among us said to the Master, “Sir, while I was looking at the Lord (image), He said, ‘Do not call Me by any name except *Prem Nath* (Lord of love).’ Having said this the image assumed your form. I hail you sir. You are here and you are there.” Then he fell at the feet of the Master. We were surprised. To avoid further talk on this subject, the Master said, “Please meet these visitors. They belong to Sind and are presently settled in Brindaban. Once they were very rich. They have renounced everything and are leading a simple life here meeting their requirements through labour. If they save anything, they spend it on charity. They have liked the place so much that they have decided to spend the rest of their life here. The other visitors whom you see have also been living here for years. They are living a peaceful life. You may now go and bathe in River Yamuna. In the meantime, I will be busy with the local visitors here.”

We bathed in the river. On our return we had lunch and after taking rest we assembled in the presence of the Master. Pointing to a visitor, the Master said, “He will now take us to a place where we shall listen to the *katha* (narration from scriptures in prose, poetry or music).” We were told that the person who presents the *katha* does it in a touching, inspiring and enchanting manner.

We walked for about 10 minutes and arrived at the place. There was a beautiful picture of Lord Krishna in a hall. It was painted on a piece of cloth. Men and women were seated on mats. Presently, a sadhu, dressed in a single piece of yellow cloth, entered the hall and sat in front of the picture to present

the *katha*. We were told that he was a law graduate and was once a rich advocate. Having abandoned his practice of law, he had settled in Brindaban and was spending his time in devotion to Lord Krishna. Today, the narration was about Bilva Mangal (Bhakt Surdas). When the narration came to the incident about Bilva Mangal piercing needles into his eyes, the sadhu's voice became choked and the atmosphere was so much surcharged with pathos that many among the audience started sobbing loudly. There were tears in many eyes. We were carried on the crest of a bliss wave. Everybody enjoyed it immensely. After the *katha* was over, we decided to go to Kunj Gali and Madhuvan. Walking some distance we came to a lane where we saw a walled structure on one side of the lane and houses on the other. Within the walled structure was Madhuvan, the forest where Lord Krishna once played with his friends. A noteworthy feature of the place was that no building facing Madhuvan had an opening (a door or a window) towards Madhuvan. We were told that even today the people heard the sound of dance music coming from the walled structure (Madhuvan) at night. It is believed that if anybody tried to peep at Madhuvan at night, he would turn blind. We then entered Madhuvan. It is said that formerly it was a vast area stretching over miles, but now it was a small piece of land within the four walls. There were trees inside. It is recorded in Srimad Bhagwat that Lord Krishna used to play *ras leela* (group dance) with *gopis* in this area. People say that even today Lord Krishna plays *ras leela* at night, but everyone does not have the capacity to see that. Those who had stealthily attempted to see it had turned blind, or dumb, or insane, and in some cases they had died. A watchman closes the gate at dusk after checking that nobody was hiding inside. Madhuvan is an important spot frequently referred to in Srimad Bhagwat.

Coming out of Madhuvan, as we wandered through the streets, we heard various kinds of sounds—singing and chanting of ‘Radhe Krishna, Gopal Krishna’, etc—coming from the houses. As we reached the river bank, we saw there a play related to the life of Lord Krishna being enacted. The scene at that time was about the episode when Lord Krishna eloped with Radha and, carrying her in a boat, arrived at this side of the river. The viewers were excited with devotion and love and they were repeatedly shouting *jai, jai*. As Lord Krishna was carrying Radha on his shoulders, she had the ego that among all the *gopis* she was the most favourite of the Lord. Noticing the ego in her, the Lord quietly laid her down in a field and went away in the boat. Absorbed in her own thoughts, Sri Radha did not notice what was happening

to her. As she came out of the reverie and looked around for the beloved (the Lord), she was shocked not to find him with her. She started shrieking, crying and wailing, and sang and danced in anguish. Eventually, she dropped unconscious on the ground. The scene enacted was so touching that tears came in the eyes of the viewers. As the *ras leela*¹ ended, the air was filled with the shouts of *Jai ho! Jai ho!* People dispersed and the players went back in boats. As we were returning, we could still hear the sound of music and dance from within the houses. It being the month of *Shravana* (when Lord Krishna was born) the entire city was in fervour on account of Janmashtami celebration. During this period, people think of nothing but Lord Krishna. Is there any other city in India where people think of nothing but Lord Krishna? Is there any other city in India where people are so much absorbed in love and devotion on a mass scale? I cannot think of any.

¹ a dance performance of Lord Krishna with *gopis*

There is very little business activity in the town and this, too, seems to be suspended in this month as everybody is absorbed in devotion. Devotion permeates everywhere. The people are simple and innocent and their faces radiate peace. They are contented and happy with what they earn. There is no race for accumulation of wealth. The displaced persons from Pakistan who had settled here after the partition also appeared to have acquired the same hue. We asked why shops were closed in the afternoon. Someone replied, “We open our shops for a while in the morning and later in the evening. We spend the rest of the time in satsang. What shall we do with money? Shall we carry it with us when we leave the world?” Would a shopkeeper in any other town reply like this? It is said that a powerful current of devotion flows through Brindaban. Hail Brindaban!

There are three important towns in India with their names starting with B. These are Brindaban¹, Benaras and Bombay. Brindaban is 100% yoga (bhakti yoga). Bombay is 100% *bhoga* (indulgence). Benaras is 50% yoga and 50% *bhoga*. Those who have been to these three cities would bear testimony to this observation.

¹ Brindaban is now called by its ancient name, Vrindavan, and Benaras by its ancient name, Varanasi.

At Brindaban one's mind remains gentle, but in Bombay it becomes harsh. One cannot have a tear arising out of devotion while one is in Bombay. It is perhaps due to the difference in the attributes of the land at the two places. Bombay is said to be the domain of Parashuram who was harsh-tempered. Therefore, people living there have the same attitude. There is an episode of Shravan Kumar recorded in the scriptures. He had carried his old blind parents on his shoulders to all places of pilgrimage in India. While he was crossing the area near Bombay, he told his parents that he would proceed further only if they gave him remuneration for his labour. His parents tried to dissuade him but he would not listen. Eventually, they promised to give him something on reaching the country a little ahead. When this area was crossed Sharvan Kumar realised his mistake and begged pardon of his parents for his sinful act. It was the effect of the land he was passing through.

While we were talking in this vein, an elderly devotee proposed to narrate his experiences of a similar nature which he had years ago. He said, "This episode occurred during our pilgrimage to Badri Nath and Kedar Nath in 1932. We were a group of 40 devotees with the Master. We were travelling very comfortably and peacefully. We had our programme like this: we used to start very early in the morning and walk till 10 or 11 o'clock. When we arrived at a *chatti*², we would spend the day there and start ahead the next morning. We used to have satsang in the evenings. On our return journey we took a different route. One day, as we just arrived at a *chatti*, two devotees in our group quarrelled between themselves. Without uttering a word to them the Master asked the party to leave the place immediately saying that the land there did not appear suitable for the halt, and that we should go to the next *chatti* on the route. We finished our food quickly, packed our things and left the place. We were already tired because of the trekking in the morning and it was 10 p.m. when we arrived at the next *chatti*. The food there had been finished and there was no place to rest because a group of pilgrims had reached there before us. We had to sleep in the open. At 3 in the morning we were made to get up to clear the passage for the party inside as they had to leave very early in the morning. We reached the next *chatti* at 11 a.m. The devotees who had quarrelled were now quiet; they had got the lesson of their life.

“When we came back home and referred to this incident one day, the Master said that the land where one stays does have an influence over an individual. Some places are pious (*punya bhoomi*) and some are vicious (*pap bhoomi*)”

Someone in the group asked the elderly devotee, “Why didn’t the Master snub the devotees who had quarrelled and thus finish the matter there? Why did he remain quiet with them?”

The elderly devotee said, “The Master has never spoken in anger to anybody. But that does not mean that he would let the devotees act as they pleased. He was always watchful and kept an eye on everybody. His method of teaching was like that of the ancient rishis. By their powers they used to create such conditions within a seeker that he would realize his mistake on his own and also correct himself. The effect of the lesson learnt by an individual on his own is lasting. A verbal stimulus might produce only a temporary effect or in some cases it might even produce adverse feelings in someone. Therefore, the Master used to influence his devotees either by his thought process or by his look. He would look at a devotee with such tenderness and love and in such a meaningful manner that the devotee would understand what he (the Master) wanted to convey to him. He hardly used words to teach. He always used his look and the thought process.”

It was dusk when we reached the *dharmshala*. We had a wash and then some refreshments. By this time, a team of singers had arrived on invitation by the host. They sang in praise of Lord Krishna. Our host, too, joined them. As he had just come after witnessing a play on Lord Krishna and visiting various spots associated with the Lord, he was in a particular mood and sang in a very touching manner. The songs were:

Appear before me, O beloved,
I cannot live without you.
Like the lotus without water,
And night without the moon,
I am consumed in separation,
And wander in anguish day and night.
With no appetite during the day,

And no sleep at night,
The lovelorn suffers the whole night.
I know not what to say,
Meet me and remove my suffering.
You are omniscient,
Why make me suffer?
Pray come and meet me,
O my gracious Lord.
Mira¹ is Thy slave through all births,
She has surrendered herself to You.

And

For Thy sake,
I renounced all comforts,
Why make me suffer now,
O my Lord.
My heart is consumed in anguish,
Pray, bring rest to it,
Leave me not this time,
Meet me with a smile,
Mira is Thy slave in all her births,
Be united with her.

¹ name of the poetess

This music added fuel to the flames. The feelings aroused during the day became stronger. Every mind experienced an upsurge of devotion. There was silence for a while. Then someone asked a question.

Question: “Sir, there appears to have come a tide to love here. One sees love and devotion on all sides. But, sir, how does a jiva obtain love and how can he make it lasting?”

Master: (*smiling with a feeling of pleasure*): “A very good question indeed and appropriate to the occasion. God has planted love in every mind. It exists like a spark in everybody. A jiva has to develop it into a blaze.”

Question: “Sir, how to learn to promote and foster love?”

Master: “You are asking about how to learn it. Very good. That makes us revise and recapitulate our earlier lessons. In this context, I am reminded of a couplet by Shah Abdul Latif. It says:

If you learn to love,
Do not fear the cross.
Let not the folk know
Your suffering for the Beloved.
Conceal your anguish within,
With vows to the Lord.

“The first line says, ‘If you learn to love’ or if you wish to learn to love, or if there is an urge in you to be in love. A jiva must be complimented if an urge to be on the spiritual path arises in him. But he must take note of a few points. First he must not fear the cross or the axe over his head. What is that axe that he must not fear? It means that whatever appears in our destiny—dishonour, loss of wealth, etc—has to be accepted cheerfully and not grudgingly. One has to accept suffering cheerfully and with pleasure and not under compulsion. One must accept suffering as the Divine Will and be pleased with it.

“When can a jiva do so? It is when he is relieved of the ego. It is when he is ready to sacrifice. Love and sacrifice are interchangeable. Ego vanishes when love arises and then one resigns oneself to the will of the Lord. Contentment with the will of the Lord is a great thing. There is no better way of love than surrendering or happily resigning oneself to the will of the Lord.

“What is the implication of sacrifice on the spiritual path? To forgo earlier habits and attitudes and adopt new habits and attitudes suited to the spiritual life is sacrifice. The senses that had been earlier let loose have to be brought under control. The eyes have to be trained to maintain gaze (*deed lagao*) and not to see evil; the hands have to be trained for service and charity, the feet have to move in the direction of satsang. As Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Change your earlier habits,
And be united with the Lord.

Sacrifice of ego is the greatest sacrifice. Everyone has his mind fixed on honour. Loss of honour is a great sacrifice or suffering. Only fakirs do not aspire for honour. They seek the Truth instead. They pray to God, ‘Kindly

grant honour to others. Grant us realisation of the Truth.’ The worldly people seek honour. They are always concerned with the ‘I’ and are rooted in duality. One is relieved of ego when one goes through dishonour, rebuke and suffering. O jiva, if you are fond of love, do not be afraid of dishonour; accept that with pleasure. This is the suffering, the axe, the cross. A jiva is benefited only when he accepts these with pleasure. Love grows with that kind of suffering and not with the suffering that is accepted grudgingly or under compulsion.

“The next point made by Shah Sahib is:

Let not the folk know,
Your suffering for the Beloved.

The Beloved sends you suffering because you are dear to Him. It is for your welfare and progress. By this, He does good to you. He sends suffering to those who are dear to Him and not to others. You must consider yourself lucky that the Lord has kept you in view and is concerned about your welfare and progress. Do not misunderstand it in any manner. Do not belittle the Beloved.

“There once lived a poor couple who were contented with the will of the Lord. They were so poor that they had only one piece of cloth to wear while going out, say for worship at the temple. So they used it by turns. The wife used to tell her husband that the Lord had done it for their welfare and they must be grateful to the Lord and that they really did not deserve this grace. She asked her husband not to let others know about their condition so that the Beloved was not belittled. She asked her husband to make this promise.

“One day God desired to see how the couple lived. He appeared in the temple in the guise of a priest. He saw that the woman came first. She offered her prayer and went back. Then the man came to offer his prayer. He saw that the man was wearing the same piece of cloth that the woman was wearing a short while ago. Calling the man the priest said to him, ‘A short while ago I saw a woman in this piece of cloth that you are wearing. What is the matter? Are you related to each other as husband and wife?’ The man told the priest that his observation was correct and that they had only one piece of cloth to share between themselves. Hearing this the priest remarked, ‘Has the Lord become so bankrupt that He cannot give you adequate clothes to wear?’

“The man was late in coming home because of this discussion. His wife

asked him the reason for the delay. The man narrated his meeting with the priest. On hearing this, the woman said, ‘You have put our Lord to shame. It was not right for you. You have exposed the secret. You ought not to have done so.’

“There have been cases of such women who were contented with the will of the Lord.

“O jiva, you have finite intelligence, whereas God is infinite or perfect intelligence. He knows what is good for you. Whatever happens to you, should be taken to have been ordained by the Lord. Do not be displeased. Do not grumble. Be pleased and accept that with pleasure.

“Why should a jiva avoid suffering? Suffering is wonderful. It is the guide on the spiritual path and leads us to the Lord. Comforts are flimsy and unhelpful. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Suffering is the beauty of comforts,
I reject comforts for suffering,
Suffering is my support,
It brings the Beloved to me.
I have bartered comforts
For anguish,
Suffering leads me
On the path to the Beloved.
Suffering illumines
The path of love,
Suffering is the guide
That leads to the beloved.”

As the host announced the dinner, the Master said that he would discuss the third point made by Shah Sahib the next day.

MEETING 35

IF YOU LEARNT TO LOVE -2

BRINDABAN 24 August, 1952

I got up at 1:30 in the morning and saw the Master sitting in meditation, his head resting on the wooden angle. I woke my friends. As we had walked for long in Brindaban on the previous day, we were tired and had slept a little longer. We had spent about an hour in meditation when at about 2:30 we heard our host singing. It was the latter part of night and he was singing *Rana*¹. This part of the night is said to be highly appropriate and effective for the *Rana* music. I, too, realised it today. In the stillness of the night, the pathetic wailing of Mumal in the sweet and touching voice of the singer (the host) immediately appealed to our minds and penetrated within. It stirred our emotions. The songs were:

1 Mumal Rana is a very long lyric and is sung to a special tune called *Rana*. It is sung mainly during the later part of night between 2 and 4. Its theme is the famous story of Mumal and Rana. The lyric depicts the pathos and anguish of Mumal who having been separated from her beloved Rana, used to spend nights crying and wailing for the beloved. Hence the music is considered appropriate and effective in the later part of the night. The story of Mumal and Rana has been a favourite theme with the Sufi saints (of Sind). The aspirant assumes himself to be Mumal and wails and cries in anguish for the beloved Rana (God). Translation of a few stanzas is presented here by way of illustration.

When will you be pleased
And meet me, my beloved?
The castle is gloomy,
The time is gone,
All my hopes are lost.
I burnt my lamp all the night,
Until the morning light.
Pray, listen to my messages,
I am deeply in anguish,
And dying without you,
Return for heaven's sake,

O beloved.
The beloved did not come,
The night is over now,
I kept moving the wick,
The oil, too, is finished.
Come, my beloved Rana,
I weep for you all the time.
I watched the stars all the time,
The morning stars are in the sky,
The beloved did not come,
The night is over now.
Let that night never come,
That is without the beloved.
Leaving me in desolation,
The beloved stays away from me.
Since you left me, my beloved,
I am swamped with suffering,
I shed tears profusely,
All the night, O beloved.
The stars are disappearing,
The horizon is brightening,
I thought of nothing
But you and your camel,
O beloved.
As I look in your direction,
Tears flow from my eyes,
I abandon all my comforts,
Beds, perfumes and drinks,
My gardens have faded,
What shall I do without you,
How can I be happy without you,
O beloved.

It was 4 o'clock. The Master rose from his bed and went inside the house. The music continued in the meantime. He returned to his bed after about twenty minutes. Breakfast was brought for him and tea was served to others. Soon the singing ended and then the Master spoke to the group.

Master: “Please note that here, too, the theme is pathos, anguish and suffering. Suffering is wonderful. The folk, or the worldly people, do not value suffering. They are scared of suffering; they avoid suffering. But suffering is very dear to fakirs. A fakir has said:

I collected suffering in my lap,
Give me yet more.

The fakir is not satiated with his sufferings and he is asking for more. But why should he do that? It is because bliss is hidden within suffering. One must visit the trader who stocks suffering, and go with enough material to give in exchange for the bargain.

“There is an episode of Bibi Rabiya Basra. She was called semi-Qalandar. Once a group of fakirs visited her. She asked them what they had learnt or gained so far. The fakirs replied, ‘When God gives us anything, we thank Him, and when he does not give us anything we do not grumble or complain. We have developed this attitude.’ Bibi Rabiya said, ‘What is great in it if you do that? Even a dog acts like that. If its master gives it a piece of loaf, it wags its tail in gratitude and if its master does not give it anything, it remains quiet and lies down at the doorstep.’ The fakirs then asked her how she lived. Bibi Sahiba replied, ‘If God gives me anything, I share it with others and if he does not give, I thank him for that special favour.’ How did Bibi Rabiya earn the high status? It is because she had accepted suffering.”

A devotee: “Sir, yesterday you said that you would take up today the remaining stanzas of the lyric by Shah Sahib.”

Master: “Yes, the lyric further says:

Let not the folk know
Your suffering for the Beloved.

Here, Shah Sahib raises the third point and cautions the seeker not to expose his feelings to the folk; he advises him to conceal on this path. What for should you expose your feelings to the folk? Will they understand what you tell them? Your talk of anguish and bliss will appear meaningless to them. They will not believe you; they will mock at you and make fun of you.

“Grant that some might appreciate what you say. They will then respect you, praise you, adorn you, assign a high status to you. You will earn publicity. But how does that help you? Do you realise God by that? If you do

not realise God, you attain nothing and your life is of no value. Appreciation among the masses brings a great harm; it arouses the subtle ego which is very dangerous.

“If at all you have to share your experiences, do it with those who are on the spiritual path, who can clarify matters and explain them to you, who can help you to correct yourself and who can inspire and encourage you. What do the folk know of the spiritual path? How can they help you?

“Secrecy is absolutely essential on this path. These things are not to be divulged to the folk. The grace of God must not be made public. What purpose does it serve if it is made public? These gifts do not belong to you. They belong to the Lord and are with you as a trust. You have to use them for your purpose and not for display among others.

“If you display these things and some unscrupulous fellows see them, they will either rob you of these or cast an evil eye on you and harm you. Thus a great damage is caused to you.

“Therefore, it is obligatory that on the spiritual path when a seeker gets suffering or yearning, he must not speak of it to others. He must strictly maintain silence so that these attributes are allowed to mature and grow in him. The spark of yearning has to be developed into a blaze. Shah Sahib has given the example of a kiln. He says:

Learn of love from a kiln,
That burns within all the day,
And yet does not give out heat.

“In the last stanza of the lyric Shah Sahib further says:

Conceal your anguish within,
With vows to the Lord.

He says that you are lucky that the Lord has bestowed suffering upon you. You must make every effort to conceal that within. If you succeed, you get the precious treasure called love.

“Initially, it is very difficult to conceal suffering. Everybody cannot do it. Shah Sahib says:

Talking of suffering is immaturity,
It is not easy to conceal suffering.

Only the lucky ones can conceal their sufferings and you must strive to be one of them. Pray to God that you may succeed in doing so. Let us take the example of a childless woman who, when she gets pregnant after waiting for long, starts behaving differently. She is extremely cautious in her actions and also tries to conceal her pregnancy to avoid an evil eye. She prays and vows to the saints and the Lord for a safe delivery. Likewise, a seeker must pray and vow to the Lord that the sufferings within may grow into a powerful blaze and in the course of time he may be bestowed with love.

“This lyric of Shah Abdul Latif is highly instructive and must be assimilated thoroughly. While complimenting the seekers (who are keen to enter the path of love) on their urge to be in love, he cautions them to observe the following guidelines:

(i) Accept ungrudgingly and cheerfully whatever you get according to destiny.

(ii) Treat sufferings as a gift from the beloved. You must not grumble or blame the beloved. These are good things from the beloved and are not harmful. Sufferings contain pleasure and bliss hidden underneath; you have only to look at them with your subtle eye. You must treat them as the blessings or grace of the beloved. They are for your good.

(iii) The beloved wants to promote you further and higher. But you must not expose your suffering or yearning. It will vanish as soon as you expose it. You must conceal it so that its potency is enhanced. Milk is kept in a covered pot for curdling; it does not change into curd if it is kept uncovered. When curd is ready, it is churned for getting butter. Similarly, love is attained only when the suffering is carefully concealed within. As cream is contained in milk, love is contained in suffering. Hence suffering is another name for love. God, love, and suffering are identical.”

The Master remained quiet for a while. Then he asked the singers to sing some devotional songs. They sang the following songs:

I

Love is a difficult climb,
Beware before you enter into love,
Love is a difficult sport,
Think before you enter,

Love is not fun or play,
Beware before you enter into love.
As a butcher cuts up a goat
And minces the flesh,
You, too, must accept
The knife on your neck,
Beware before you enter into love.
Go through all trials,
Ignore life and death,
Then attempt crossing the channel,
Beware before you enter into love.

II

Love is not a game
Played by children,
It breaks the bond
Of the body and the soul,
Mount first the gallows,
You may then be accepted.

III

There is a call from the gallows
To all the lovers.
If you desire to love,
Take not a step forward,
Surrender first your head,
Then ask what is love.

IV

Love is a different game,
A person with no anguish
Knows not what is love.
The blaze of love is strong,
The brave and wise alone
Can jump into the blaze.

Love is the game of death,
The brave alone win the game.
Roast your body alive,
Then enter the sport of love.
A *lahooti*¹ alone knows, O Budhal²
The secret of love.

V

Care not for your head,
If you are in love,
Surrender your head, says Latif,
And place it before the beloved.
Love is a deadly snake,
The affected alone know what it is.

VI

Jump with ardour
Into the game of love,
Care not for your life,
O the *lahooti* seeker.
Love is a snake,
The affected alone know of venom.

VII

Make a strong call on the field of love,
That may get a call in return,
Fix your head high on the cross,
But utter not a word,
Love is a deadly snake,
The affected alone know what it is.

VIII

Stay on the field,
If you can bear the cross,

Else you must depart,
It is the land of crucifiers.

1 one who has attained the state of *lahoot*, that is, Self-realisation

2 name of the poet

When the music was over, the Master said, “This is very good. This has helped us to revise and recapitulate our lessons on love. It is also the grace of God that having brought us to the city of love, he has made us revise the lesson on love. We must be grateful to Him. We conclude the satsang today. Let us take our breakfast and be ready to leave.”

We got up and attended to our morning duties. Soon the breakfast was served. We came out of the *dharmshala*. Some persons took us to a place where a *ras leela*¹ was being organised. After spending about thirty minutes there, we came back to the *dharmshala*, packed our luggage and got ready to leave. As we came out, we saw a large gathering of sadhus at the gate. Maybe that they had heard about the Master and had come to see him. The Master said to a devotee, “This is a land of oblation. We must give something to the sadhus.” The devotee took out a wad of currency notes and stood by the side of the Master. He distributed the money as the Master asked him to. Then the Master said to us, “One must not go away from here without giving something in charity. This is a land of great significance.” On hearing these words of the Master each one of us gave away something according to his capacity. We took leave of the sadhus and left the place by cars.

1 a dance performance of Lord Krishna with *gopis*

When we reached Mathura, we were told that the temples there were closed as it was afternoon. Not waiting there, we proceeded towards Gokul. It is a very small and simple village consisting of a very few houses made mostly of mud and straw. We came to river Yamuna and bathed there. We met a brahmin who took us to a *kacha* house where Lord Krishna, it is said, used to play with His friends. The brahmin offered to perform a worship for us. The Master accepted his proposal. After the worship was over, a devotee

asked the Master if what the brahmin had said of the place was correct. The Master said, "Yes, he is correct. It is the place where the Lord used to play during His childhood. But the house seems to have been built recently and that Lord Krishna lived here more than 5,000 years ago." The devotee then asked him what the purpose of the worship was. The Master said, "It was in remembrance of the beloved and for general welfare." Another devotee asked, "Sir, you did not set your foot in Mathura, but you walked fairly well in Brindaban and Gokul." The Master said, "I do not know. Things happen as are ordained by the Lord. Maybe that Mathura was a princely city, whereas Brindaban and Gokul were poor places and I love poverty very much. These two places are much superior to Mathura in so far as love is concerned."

As we were about to start the return journey, a devotee shouted: Hail Sri Krishna! Hail the Lord of Love! Hail Doctor Sahib! Hail the City of Love! Hail love, lover and beloved! Everybody in the group was excited and shouted *jai, jai*. We bowed down and put our foreheads on the ground of the city of love, applied a little dust on our foreheads and then bowed to the Master. He patted our backs and blessed us. We got into the cars and reached Delhi in the evening after a journey of three to four hours. Thus our pilgrimage to the cities of love came to an end.

MEETING 36

DHAMAL

SHANTI NAGAR *October, 1952*

The Master had been on a trip to Delhi and Hardwar. As soon as I came to know of his return to Shanti Nagar, I went to meet him. It was about 10:30 a.m. when I came into his presence. A few devotees were sitting opposite him. I paid obeisance to him, and took a seat opposite him. Presently a devotee carrying a *naqqara* (kettle drum) entered the hall. Placing the *naqqara* before the Master, he paid obeisance to him. The Master enquired about his wellbeing and about the *naqqara*.

Master: “This appears to be a fine *naqqara*. How did you happen to bring it here?”

Devotee: “Sir, some days ago, I had a dream in which a divine soul suggested that a *naqqara* should be played at the abode of the Master in Shanti Nagar. Accepting that as a divine command, I got this *naqqara* made and have brought it here. Kindly accept it.”

Master: “While we were at Hardwar, someone else, too, had a divine hint like that. But I wanted to see the divine play and decided to wait and see what pleased the Lord. You have brought it here. We thank God. Now you must play it and have it inaugurated.”

The devotee got up and bowed to the Master and then picked up a pair of sticks and played the *naqqara* for a couple of minutes. Soon he felt that his hands were tired. Others took turns but nobody could play it well. Presently, an elderly devotee from a nearby barrack, whom everyone called *Mamaji* (uncle), entered the hall. Seeing the *naqqara* he spoke to the Master.

Mamaji: “Sir, this seems to be the *naqqara* of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.”

Master: “So it has been brought here by his command. Since you have spent many years at Sewhan¹, you should know how to play it.”

¹ a town in Sind famous for the Dargah Sahib of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz

Mamaji: “Yes, sir. I used to frequently visit the Dargah Sahib of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz at Sewhan and saw the *dhamal*² played there. I learnt the tune

for *dhamal* and played it on drums for a long time. Years have passed since I left that place. I hope that by your grace I shall have no difficulty in playing it again.”

2 Dhamal is an important activity at the Dargah Sahib of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. A special tune is played on the *naqqara* (kettle drums) and the devotees practise concentration with the beat of the drum. It may also involve rhythmic foot movement.

Master: “All right. Pick up the sticks and play.”

Mamaji started playing and continued without difficulty for fifteen minutes. It was enchanting and exhilarating music and the hall vibrated with the beat of *naqqara*. The Master was absorbed in his thoughts, and others, too, sat quietly in meditation. The tune included alternately the beat of *Mast Qalandar* for five minutes and the beat of *shadmana*³ for a minute. When the drum play was over, the Master spoke to the gathering.

3 a tune expressing excitement and jubilation

Master: “*Mamaji*, that is excellent. We had the pleasure of Sewhan revived here today. Henceforth, it will be your duty to play *dhamal* here twice every day—once early in the morning for thirty minutes at 4 o’clock and then in the evening at about 7:30 after the evening service (*arati*).”

Soon all the local visitors in the hall left for their homes. Then I put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, what is *dhamal* and what is the purpose of it?”

Master: “*Dhamal* is played before kings and sages. It signifies conquest. Sages conquer the mind and kings conquer the land. *Dhamal* also signifies something else on the spiritual path. This word is made up of two words—*dam* and *hal* meaning control of the breath. When *dhamal* is played in the presence of sages, devotees are required to move their steps to the rhythm of the beat and at the same time they have to recite in the same rhythm the *shabd* received from the preceptor. They must practise to achieve concentration with the rhythm of the beat. In this manner their thought is withdrawn from other things and they get absorbed in the *shabd* and thus they attain samadhi. When a seeker concentrates on the *shabd* and attains

absorption, his breath is also attuned to the rhythm. The practice or discipline of this kind is also called *raqs*.”

Question: “Sir, does it imply that every seeker must participate in *dhamal*?”

Master: “The seekers whose thinking, breath movement and concentration are not trained and who experience difficulty in this process may participate in *dhamal*. This, too, is a kind of exercise. The mind of the seeker is purified with this practice and then he becomes fit for more difficult exercises.”

Question: “Sir, is a flag, too, a symbol of conquest?”

Master: “Yes, a flag, too, is a symbol of conquest. It is hoisted when kings conquer the land or fakirs conquer the mind; then the joy of the conquest is exhibited by the play of the drums. Kings organise the play of drums to express their happiness, whereas saints have it to regulate concentration.”

Question: “Sir, kings order the hoisting of flags and beating of drums. Do fakirs, too, command like that?”

Master: “No, fakirs are not concerned with the manifest symbols; they have fully surrendered themselves to the Lord. They remain quiet when flags and *dhamal* are arranged under the divine will without their volition. Thanking the Lord, they consign themselves to His will and remain busy in remembering Him. Fakirs do not desire exposure of their divine secrets. When the Lord desires to make His dear ones known to the people, flags and drums automatically find appearance.”

Then came the call for lunch. We had a siesta after the lunch. After tea at 4 o’clock, we assembled for the evening satsang. Some devotees were amused to see a drum placed in their midst, so they asked a question.

Question: “Sir, this appears to be a fine kettle drum sent by the Lord. Shall we not have it played for a while at the commencement of satsang?”

Master: “Why not? (*addressing a devotee*) Please go and call *Mamaji*. We will ask him to play it for a while.”

Mamaji was called. He played the drum for fifteen minutes. The devotees enjoyed it very much. In the surcharged atmosphere everybody felt exhilarated and absorbed. When the drum beat was over, the Master opened his eyes. Others, too, raised their heads. Satsang started thereafter and it continued up to 6 o’clock.

It was now time for the train for Bombay, so I took leave of the Master.

[Since that day, *dhamal* is played there three times a day—for thirty minutes at 4 a.m., for fifteen minutes at 4 p.m. and for fifteen minutes after the evening service (*arati*). The practice continues even to this day.]

MEETING 37

LIFE OF QALANDAR LAL SHAHBAZ

SHANTI NAGAR *September, 1957*

It was about 9 a.m. The Master was seated in a chair, reading the morning newspaper. I was sitting on a mat opposite him. A devotee (C) entered the hall. After paying obeisance to the Master, he sat by my side.

Master (*addressing C*): “So you have come. I had been expecting you. Yesterday, one of our friends (D) who lives in a barrack nearby came here and narrated his dream in which he had a vision of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. He might be in the hut down below. Please call him and note down what he had seen in his vision.”

D was called. He gave to C the following account of the vision.

D: “Last week at about 2 in the morning of 12 September, I saw a fakir in a dream. He said, ‘I am Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. You have forgotten me, but I continue to look after you even in India.’ I sought his command. He said, ‘Convey my message to Dr Rochaldas Sahib and tell him to celebrate my death anniversary (*varsi, urs*) at Shanti Nagar as it is done at Sewhan¹ in Sind. All Sufi saints of India should be invited. The following things must also be done during the celebration: the flag mast should be decorated with lights and buntings, incense should be burnt and an oil lamp should be kept burning continually before the flag mast, and *prasad* and water should be served to all. A banner should be put up at the water stand, saying: *He who serves and drinks water here shall be blessed.*’ He further gave me some instructions about my participation in the celebrations and then disappeared.

¹ The Dargah of Qalander Lal Shahbaz is situated at Sewhan in Sind. The death anniversary of Qalander Lal Shahbaz is celebrated there in a big way.

“I got up astonished. I did not get sleep thereafter. During the day I got busy with my work and thought little of my dream. But as I tried to forget it, thinking that it was an ordinary dream, it came to my mind again and again and the image of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz repeatedly appeared before me. A week passed, but I could not forget the dream. Thinking that it was an

unusual dream, and perhaps true, I came here yesterday to report to Doctor Sahib.”

After C had finished taking dictation, D went back to the hut. Then I put a question to the Master.

Question: “Sir, could that be a genuine vision in that dream?”

Master: “Can’t say. Time will show.”

Question: “Sir, if it was a genuine vision, shall we say that we shall have here a big festival every year, as it is done at Sewhan in Sind?”

Master: “You have taken notes. Let us see what is ordained by the Lord for the future.”

Question: “Sir, won’t it be a costly affair to invite saints from all over India? How shall we make elaborate arrangements at such a small place we have at Shanti Nagar?”

Master: “You are right. But nothing is wanting with the Lord. He will grant means to those who will celebrate.”

The Master remained quiet for a while. Presently a few devotees entered the hall. They included some elderly persons who originally belonged to Sewhan. I said to the Master, “Sir, this morning there was a reference to Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. Our elderly friends from Sewhan have providentially come here. Kindly ask them to tell us something about Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.”

Addressing an elderly devotee, the Master said, “You were born and brought up at Sewhan and had spent many years there at the Dargah Sahib of Qalander Lal Shahbaz. You might be knowing a lot. Please tell us something.” The elderly devotee said that he could tell only what he knew. The Master agreed. The elderly devotee gave the following narration.

Elderly devotee: “One day while Qalandar Lal Shahbaz was baking loaves, the Qazi of the town happened to pass that way. Seeing Lal Shahbaz, the Qazi said, ‘O! fakir, the month of fasting (Ramzan) starts today. How is it that you are baking loaves at this time?’ Hearing the Qazi’s words the fakir (Lal Shahbaz) pushed the half-baked loaves into the hot ash in the fire-pot. Then he covered himself with a rug and sat in meditation. Later, towards the evening when the Qazi returned along the same path, he saw the fakir still in meditation. Everyday as he passed by that place in the morning and in the evening, the Qazi saw the fakir in meditation. At the end of the month when the Qazi saw him still in meditation, he shouted ‘O fakir, the period of fasting is over and it is Id today. You, too, must break your fast.’ Hearing the Qazi’s

words the fakir cast away his rug, took out a loaf from the ash, ate a morsel and thus broke his fast.

“Only a fakir of a very high order can remain in meditation in a fixed posture for one month. His name was Hazrat Makhdoom Usman Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, Buland Parwaz, Marvandi.

“Supreme among saints and sages, an ocean of grace and mercy, the mitigator of misery and a guide on the spiritual path, he was always forgiving and benevolent. It is not possible to fully describe his greatness or to give an account of his life. Nevertheless, a brief account may be attempted.

“There lived at Marvand in the kingdom of Tabrez, a Syed, Ibrahim Kabiruddin by name. God-fearing and a man of devotion, he observed great austerities. He was among the well-known Syeds in the area. Once, while Syed Ibrahim was on a pilgrimage to Karbala-i-Mualla, he had a vision in which Imam Hussain told him that he wanted to bestow upon him a *baz* (falcon) that he had received as a gift from his elders.

“Later, one day, while Syed Ibrahim was engaged in prayer, he heard a divine voice coming from his back saying, ‘I want to be your progeny. I am Qalandar Lal Shahbaz about whom you had a revelation during your pilgrimage to Karbala-i-Mualla,’ Thereafter, Syed Ibrahim who had previously declined marriage proposals, consented to marry. The king of Tabrez gave him his daughter in marriage. The marriage ceremony was organised on a grand scale, lasting for forty days. In due course he was blessed with a divine child in the month of Rajab in 538 A.H. corresponding to the year 1118 A.D. The child was extremely beautiful; its forehead radiated a divine glow. Since Syed Ibrahim had the revelation at the tomb of Imam Hussain that he was being blessed with a *baz* (falcon), he decided to name the child Lal Shahbaz. As the child grew up, his beauty and charm enhanced. He was considered peerless. He had broad eyes and his face shone like a mirror, glittering with divinity. He had a mole on his right cheek. It was said in those days that God had created two beautiful persons among the Arabs—Hazrat Yusuf¹ and Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.

1 of Yusuf Zaleakha episode

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz possessed not merely physical charm, he had spiritual grace also and because of that he attracted everybody towards

himself. He was bestowed with occult powers since his birth. At the age of seven, he had committed to memory the Quran Shareef. While playing at school he would throw into a pond the books of his classmates and then get them back absolutely dry, to their astonishment. He was fond of red colour and always used red clothes. At the age of twelve, he often went out of the town with a friend to a place where thorny bushes grew. His friend carried a drum with him on which he played the tune for *dhamal* and Qalandar Lal Shahbaz played *dhamal* on the bushes. At that time he would have all his clothes off except an undergarment (which he always used since his early childhood). He would go into ecstasy and be engaged in *raqs* on the thorny bushes. His body would start bleeding and turn red. Then in a state of extreme fervour he would call ‘Ali! Ali!’ and then disappear. He would reappear after some time in the bazaar or at some other place. He was a past master in absorption since his childhood. He would remain engaged in meditation for days together in a forest or in the hills. During his youth he would often lose outer consciousness and remain in *raqs*. He would stand motionless at a place for days together remaining fully absorbed in the visions of the Lord and His nature.

“He was fond of travelling and walked long distances. He frequently visited the tomb of Imam Musa at Mashhad, which was not very far from Marvand. The distance between Mashhad and Marvand was rocky and he covered it on foot and remained on fast during the journey. He had profound faith in Imam Musa and had evolved his principles and methods of Qalandari discipline (*Qalandari tariqat*) according to the discipline (*tariqat*) of Imam Musa. He came in contact with Baba Ibrahim Wali and benefited by it. Baba Ibrahim Wali had earned grace from Shah Jamal Mujarrad. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz took leave of Baba Ibrahim Wali after some time, and went on a pilgrimage to Harman Shareef. On the way he came in contact with Sher Shah Jalal and they became friends. They spent considerable time in prayer together. As they were Hussaini, they used red clothes. After some time, they separated from each other and proceeded along their individual courses of journey.

“Qalandar Lal Shabaz went to Harman Shareef and from there proceeded to Anjab Shareef on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Hazrat Ali. There he received a divine command to go to Karbala-i-Mualla where his father had been anxiously waiting for him and that he had to receive at the Dargah of Imam Hussain the command for the spiritual discipline (*tariqat*).

“So Qalandar Lal Shahbaz came to Karbala-i-Mualla. His father was very happy to see him. Soon the father felt that his end was coming nearer. He told his son that by the divine will, he (Lal Shahbaz) was to go to India and to introduce there the Qalandari discipline (*tariqat*). He asked him to go to his disciple Shah Jamal Mujarrad and to obtain from him the spiritual powers and gifts. In a few days the father left his mortal frame.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz met Baba Ibrahim Wali and told him about the divine command for introducing the Qalandari discipline. Baba Wali was very pleased. He embraced Lal Shahbaz and told him that his name would be remembered till the doomsday. He handed to him the charge of his son Mir Kallan and before long he left for the heavenly abode.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz left for India. On the way he passed through Baghdad where he spent some time in the company of fakirs and dervishes. Then through Makran he entered Sind. He asked his associates to proceed in the direction of Sivistan (which is presently known as Sewhan), and himself proceeded in the direction of Multan. At Multan he met his friend Sher Shah Jalal. Soon, Baba Sheikh Farid and Ghaus Bahauddin also joined him.

“One day he went into Multan town with a basket of wheat for grinding. He came to a house where he saw a woman moving a grinding stone. With his eyes cast to the ground, he stopped at the house gate. The woman asked him what had brought him there. On hearing his reply she asked him to come in. She took from him the basket of wheat and started grinding. She was so much struck by his beauty that she could not restrain herself. When she expressed her desire for him, he told her that she was a married woman and that it was a sin for her to look at another man. Not paying heed to his advice, she pressed him for the satisfaction of her desire and told him that if he refused to oblige her, she would raise an alarm and accuse him of misbehaviour. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz tried to run away. Hearing the cries of the woman the neighbours rushed out and got hold of him and brought him before the Qazi. The Qazi told him that the only way for acquittal for him was to produce a witness in his defence. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz told the Qazi that the only person who was present in the house at that time was the suckling baby of the woman who was lying in the cradle and that it might be brought in as the witness. If he was innocent, the baby would speak the truth. The baby was brought in. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz asked the baby, in the name of God, to speak the truth. It was a providential grace and wonder that the suckling baby sat up, started talking and correctly narrated the facts.

Everyone was struck with wonder by this miraculous happening. The Qazi begged pardon of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. The woman, too, promised not to do a sinful act in future.

“When the news spread in the town, people in large numbers gathered in the forest where Qalandar Lal Shahbaz was staying with his friends. The nawab of the province, Prince Mohammed Shaheed who always held dervishes in high esteem, also went there and very respectfully brought Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and his friends to his palace for a stay for some time. Seeing the devotion of the prince, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz stayed in Multan for some time. He performed many miracles and blessed the people with his grace. He put many persons on the spiritual path and some of them became saints. After spending some time at Multan, he continued his travel with his three friends. The four friends arrived at a place. It so happened that there Ghaus Bahauddin was implicated in a case on a false charge and was awarded death sentence. When Ghaus Bahauddin was at the gallows, his three friends planned to save him from there by assuming different forms according to their capabilities. Sheikh Farid assumed the form of a deer and appeared before the mob that had gathered there to watch the execution. Sher Shah Jalal assumed the form of a lion, and chased the deer. The frightened mob started running for safety. Assuming the form of a falcon, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz lifted Ghaus Bahauddin from there and took him to a safe place.

“One day his three friends told Qalandar Lal Shahbaz that whereas they offered prayer (*namaz*) five times a day, he did not offer prayer at all. Then, they requested him to join them in the prayer. Initially, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz remained quiet but when they pressed him again, he joined them in the prayer. As he knelt down for the prayer, his friends saw blood oozing out of his skin pores. The friends regretted their error and did not press him any more to offer prayer (*namaz*).

“Travelling together, they arrived at Kolhapur where Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad lived. The fame of Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad had spread to distant places. He was a saint of a high order and also wielded strong occult powers. Originally he belonged to Egypt. From there he had gone to Karbala-i-Mualla where he did service to his preceptor. There he received in trust the spiritual powers. Then he came to India. He, too, had spent some time at Multan where he graced many persons and guided them on the spiritual path. Thus he became famous in India. From Multan he came to Kolhapur which was then known as a centre for spiritual discipline.

“Coming into the presence of Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and his three friends requested him to initiate them as his disciples. Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad had a large frying-pan in which oil was kept boiling on a fire. Sitting by the side of the pan he stirred the oil with a large stirrer in one hand and remained absorbed in meditation. At times he put both his legs into the fire. When any aspirant approached him for initiation, he would ask him to jump into the boiling frying-pan and come alive out of it, before he could be accepted as his disciple. Many aspirants turned away merely at the sight of the frying pan. If someone ventured to jump he was turned into ashes in the frying pan.

“Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad welcomed the four new comers. Addressing Sher Shah Jalal he said, ‘You shall have two saints born to you and their names shall be Ghaus and Qutab and you ought to be contented with your present state.’ Hearing him, Ghaus Bahaiddin and Sheikh Farid remained quiet. But Qalandar Lal Shahbaz stood before the frying-pan in expectation of the order from Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad to jump into it. Seeing his enthusiasm and determination, Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad asked him to jump into the pan. Doing *raqs* around the pan, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz jumped into it like a moth. His friends and onlookers were surprised to see him disappear in the pan as if he had dived into a pond. When Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad called him, he came out and prostrated himself before him. The Syed hugged him and said that he would transfer to him the spiritual gifts and powers that he had received as a divine trust from his elder fakirs. Taking out from his neck the piece of loadstone that carried immense occult powers and had helped him in spiritual progress, he put it around the neck of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. He also gave him a small staff of almond wood which, too, carried occult powers. Thereafter Qalandar Lal Shahbaz spent his time in service to his preceptor. Some time later Syed Shah Jamal Mujarrad left his mortal frame. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had a tomb built on the grave of his preceptor. The tomb still exists in a fine condition at Kolhapur and it is an important place of pilgrimage. The frying-pan is also preserved there for the visiting devotees to have a look at it.

“Assuming the garb of a fakir, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz toured India and saved millions of people from superstition and ignorance and promoted them on the spiritual path. During his travel he met Qalandar Bu Ali and had bouts of occult combat with him. One day sitting on a wall made of clay bricks, Qalandar Bu Ali set the wall in motion towards Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. But

Qalandar Lal Shahbaz halted the motion of the wall.

“After he assumed the guise of a fakir, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz used to ride a lion and carry a cobra as a whip in his hand. He travelled through Junagarh and Girnar where he helped the masses in their spiritual progress. Then he entered Sind. He established the Qalandari discipline (*tariqat*) and accepted people as disciples. His friend, Sher Shah Jalal, also put his son, Syed Ali Shah Sarmast, under his care. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz spent time at various places in Sind. At Rohri he met very high ranking saints. Then he spent some time at Khairpur where the ruler accorded to him a very warm welcome. The ruler had a Hindu minister, named Mehto Manjar who was son of Mermal. Manjar became a disciple of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and served him with profound devotion. Pleased with him Qalandar Lal Shahbaz told him that he should no more be a servant to a man but be a servant to God. The descendants of Manjar are called Merani.

“Eventually Qalandar Lal Shahbaz came to Sivistan, which later came to be known as Sewhan, a renowned place of pilgrimage with famous temples of Lord Shiva. Many yogis and pundits lived there. Nearby was another place of pilgrimage—Barmasar. There is a reference to it in the Shiv Puran.¹ Hindu devotees in large numbers used to come from distant places. During the Muslim rule, however, their number declined and gradually the place became less known.

¹ an important Hindu scripture

“Besides being a place of pilgrimage, Sewhan was also the capital of Sind. It is said that during the period of Mahabharata, King Jaidrath ruled there. The place was also called Bhartristhan because the famous ruler-turned-yogi Bhartrihari after renouncing the kingdom of Ujjain, lived there practising yoga in the company of great yogis. Some people believe that Qalandar Lal Shahbaz was the reincarnation of Bhartrihari. When Qalandar Lal Shahbaz entered Sewhan, Jesarji of Sumira Dynasty was the ruler of Sind. He was a foolish and incompetent king. He was known for his misrule.

“The place where Qalandar Lal Shahbaz first came to stay in Sewhan was a locality inhabited by prostitutes. On the very first night of his arrival there, all the clients visiting the prostitutes became desireless. On the next morning when the women discovered that a dervish had come to stay in their midst,

and that the happening of the previous night was a miracle enacted by the dervish, they collectively approached and requested him to select some other place for himself so that they did not lose their earnings and the trade. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz told them that the Lord had commanded that his final resting place would be at that spot and that they should select some other place for themselves. Not willing to agree to his suggestion, the women went to complain to the king.

“The king had, at that time, ordered the killing of an innocent fakir Bodla Bahar by name, by a butcher, on a false charge and had his flesh sold in the market. The people who got the meat heard a voice coming out of the pieces of flesh saying, ‘Do not eat. Murshid Lal is coming.’ Hearing the voice, many people did not consume the meat, but some obstinate people did eat it.

“When the women arrived in the king’s court and reported the arrival of a dervish in their area, the ministers and the astrologers told the king that he would die at the hands of this dervish and that the fakir whom he had got butchered was his disciple. They advised the king to get back the flesh of the fakir from the butcher’s shop. They suggested to him to get some silken cloth and a horse decorated with golden bridle and send these as presents to the dervish and to request him to settle at some other place. Accepting their advice, the king sent the presents to Qalandar Lal Shahbaz through his minister. When the minister arrived in the presence of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz along with the gifts, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz ordered his men to throw the presents into a fire. He then commanded the minister to ask the king to come there with the pot containing the flesh of Bodla fakir. When the king came there along with the pot containing the flesh, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz asked him why he had ordered the killing of his disciple Bodla fakir. The king replied that Bodla fakir used to sit opposite the window where his daughter sat for fresh air. He used to brush the ground with his beard and say, ‘Murshid Lal is coming. When is he coming? Wherefrom is he coming?’ People started gossiping that the fakir was in love with the princess and for that reason he was always sitting opposite the window where the princess sat. Annoyed at it he ordered that the fakir be killed by a butcher and his flesh sold in the market. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz told the king that he had, for no reason, got a fakir killed and that he (king) was irreligious. He further told him that he wished to give him an opportunity to reform himself and, therefore, advised him to fear God and take to the path of righteousness. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz then called the name ‘Bodla’ three times and in no

time Bodla came out of the pot calling ‘Murshid! Murshid!’ and he prostrated himself before Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. Flesh was missing at some places on his body because some obstinate people had consumed some pieces of flesh. When Qalandar Lal Shahbaz commanded those pieces of flesh to return to Bodla, they shot out of the bodies of those people and reappeared on the body of Bodla Bahar. Those people became victims of leprosy and their descendants still carry leprosy marks.

“Seeing the miracles of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, the prostitutes hurriedly left that place and settled elsewhere. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz ordered his people to demolish their houses. When the disciples occupied the land, the owner of the land came and attacked Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and abused him. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz hit him so hard that the man died there instantly. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz asked his men to dig a pit and bury the dog in it. The servants of the landlord complained to the king. The king already had a grudge against Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, so seizing the opportunity he ordered his men to arrest him on a charge of murder. When the ministers reached the place and enquired about the murder, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz told them that no man had been killed; rather a mad dog who had come to attack them was killed and buried at that place. But the servants of the landlord alleged that the fakir was telling a lie and that their master was buried there. When the spot was dug under instructions of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, everybody was surprised to see the carcass of a black dog buried there.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz often used to sit where Bodla Bahar previously sat. One day the foolish king got the meat of a cat cooked and sent it with some loaves of bread to Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. The sound of mewing of a cat was coming out of the pot. Provoked by this incident, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz said that the nonbeliever was showing no signs of faith. He turned the pot upside down and with that the castle of the king toppled upside down and was buried. Later, a new township was built at that site.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz undertook severe penances at various spots; these have been preserved as places of pilgrimage. By his powers, he produced water springs in desert areas where parks were developed. He also went on tour and pilgrimage to Lahoot, Hinglaj, etc. Many saints and fakirs in Sind benefited by their association with him. Among them was Udero, son of Ratan, at Nasarpur, who served him so intently and with devotion that Qalandar Lal Shahbaz was pleased with him and called him Udero Lal¹ and bestowed many occult powers upon him. Udero Lal used to ride a horse on

water. Muslims in Sind call Udero Lal as *Zindah Peer* (ever-living saint) and his place is an important place of pilgrimage. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and Udero Lal are invoked by the common slogan of *Jhule Lal*. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz toured Sind extensively for a considerable time. As Sewhan was ordained to be his final resting place, he spent his last days there.

1 'Lal' means 'a jewel'.

“Sewhan was known as a centre of yogis and fakirs. There lived a fakir, Chuto Amerani. His earthen lamp burnt with water instead of oil. He sent to Qalandar Lal Shahbaz a pot of milk filled to the brim, indicating that the city of Sewhan was already fully packed with saints and yogis. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz put a rose on the milk pot. The flower remained floating there signifying that Qalandar Lal Shahbaz would stay there supreme among all the saints and yogis. On seeing this, Chuto Amerani prostrated himself before Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and became his disciple.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz always had a piece of loadstone round his neck. His look was always directed towards the ground. He frequently visited the street where the Kanungo family lived. Mehto Gharyomal Kanungo was his disciple and he served Qalandar Lal Shahbaz very well. Being pleased with him, he immensely blessed Mehto.

“As Qalandar Lal Shahbaz saw that his end had arrived, he told Mehto that he would leave his mortal frame on Thursday night on the 19th day of the month of Shahban. He asked Mehto Kanungo to bring *mendi* on the 20th Shahban. Mehto Manjar was told to bring *mendi* on the 19th. These were to be brought ceremonially with music and pomp and show. He said that the Syeds would bring *mendi* before them and if there were any difficulty they should remember him and then things would be easy for them.

“Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had graced many a person in Sewhan. Everyone had his desire fulfilled at his place. The city of Sewhan prospered. Many persons became his disciples and followers. There was continuous free kitchen and Mehto Manjar looked after that. *Dhamal* was played twice a day. A flag post was erected. The flag of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz is called the flag of Fazal Abas Alamdar. Prominent among his disciples were Abdullah Shah Abdal, Sikandar Bodlo Bahar and Syed Ali Sarmast. When the end approached, Qalandar Lal Shahbaz handed to Ali Sarmast all the spiritual and

occult powers that he had held with him as a trust. He also gave him the necessary instructions about Qalandari discipline (*tariqat*) and also about the place of his burial. Then he sat down in meditation and soon the disciples saw that Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had left his mortal frame. That was in the year 650 A.H. corresponding to the year 1230 A.D. The funeral and burial were supervised by Syed Ali Sarmast. He also got a tomb built over the grave.

“After Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, the Qalandari discipline was maintained by Syed Ali Sarmast. He was considered the minister of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and enjoyed his special favours. When the two walked together, Ali Sarmast would remain ahead, followed by Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. Syed Ali Sarmast had many disciples and he had graced many a person. In due course, he, too, left his mortal frame and was buried near the grave of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. The two tombs are so located that a visitor has first to go to the tomb of Syed Ali Sarmast and then to proceed to the tomb of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.

“The death anniversary (*varsi, urs*) of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz is observed on the 18, 19 and 20 of the month of Shahban according to the Hijri calendar. Devotees and saints from various countries, including India, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt visit Sewhan for the anniversary programme. The daily programme includes the *mendi* ceremony, fireworks and the *dhamal* where the devotees do *raqs*. The participants earn the grace and blessings of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.”

Thus the elderly devotee concluded his narration. Everyone in the hall was pleased to hear him. A devotee sought permission to raise a question.

Devotee: “Sir, we have some questions to ask. Won’t you kindly enlighten us further?”

Master: “Please do. I will be happy to answer your questions.”

Devotee: “Sir, what is *mendi*?”

Master: “The floral cover or sheet that is ceremonially laid over the grave of a fakir during the anniversary celebration is called *mendi*.¹ It is also called *par*. It is ceremonially taken out in a procession, with great regard and devotion, to the accompaniment of music and dance, and is laid on the grave of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. There is great excitement, exhilaration and ecstasy on the occasion. It is said to be a period of the divine grace.

¹ In some parts of India, the floral sheet is also called *chaddar*.

“The *mendi* of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz is taken out on three days—18, 19 and 20 of Shahban. On the 18th—the first day of the anniversary celebration—the *mendi* is offered and carried by the Syeds; on the second day, by the Meranis who are descendants of Mehto Manjar, and on the third day, by the Kanungos by virtue of the services rendered by Dewan Rai Ghuriyo Kanungo to Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. So see the rich benefits accruing from service.”

A devotee: “Sir, we were told that Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had said to our friend D in a vision that his anniversary should be celebrated here. There must be some purpose behind it.”

Master: “Yes, there must be a purpose and everybody will see it in due course. The Revered Master was a great-grandson of Syed Ali Sarmast. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had travelled extensively; he was also called *Jahaniyan-gasht* (one who has toured the world). He had handed over the spiritual and occult powers to Syed Ali Sarmast; he, too, was called *Jahaniyan-gasht*. His descendants are called *Jahaniyan-pota* (*Jahaniyan children*). Thus a relationship has been maintained with Qalandar Lal Shahbaz in every generation. We, too, are the children of the Revered Master. Progeny is of two kinds—one by physical birth (i.e. offspring from *nadi* or placenta) and other through spiritual initiation (*noori*). We are his spiritual progeny and thus we, too, are the great-grand children of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. We have thus been graced. Once I thought of going on a pilgrimage to the Dargah of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. When I expressed my desire to the Revered Master, he was very pleased. Holding my hand in excitement, he raised it and said, ‘Ya Qalandar Shahbaz, this child is now assigned to your care.’ He repeated this three times and then allowed me to go. See how the elders look after their children.”

The Master became quiet. There were tears in his eyes. Nobody spoke for a while. Then a devotee spoke.

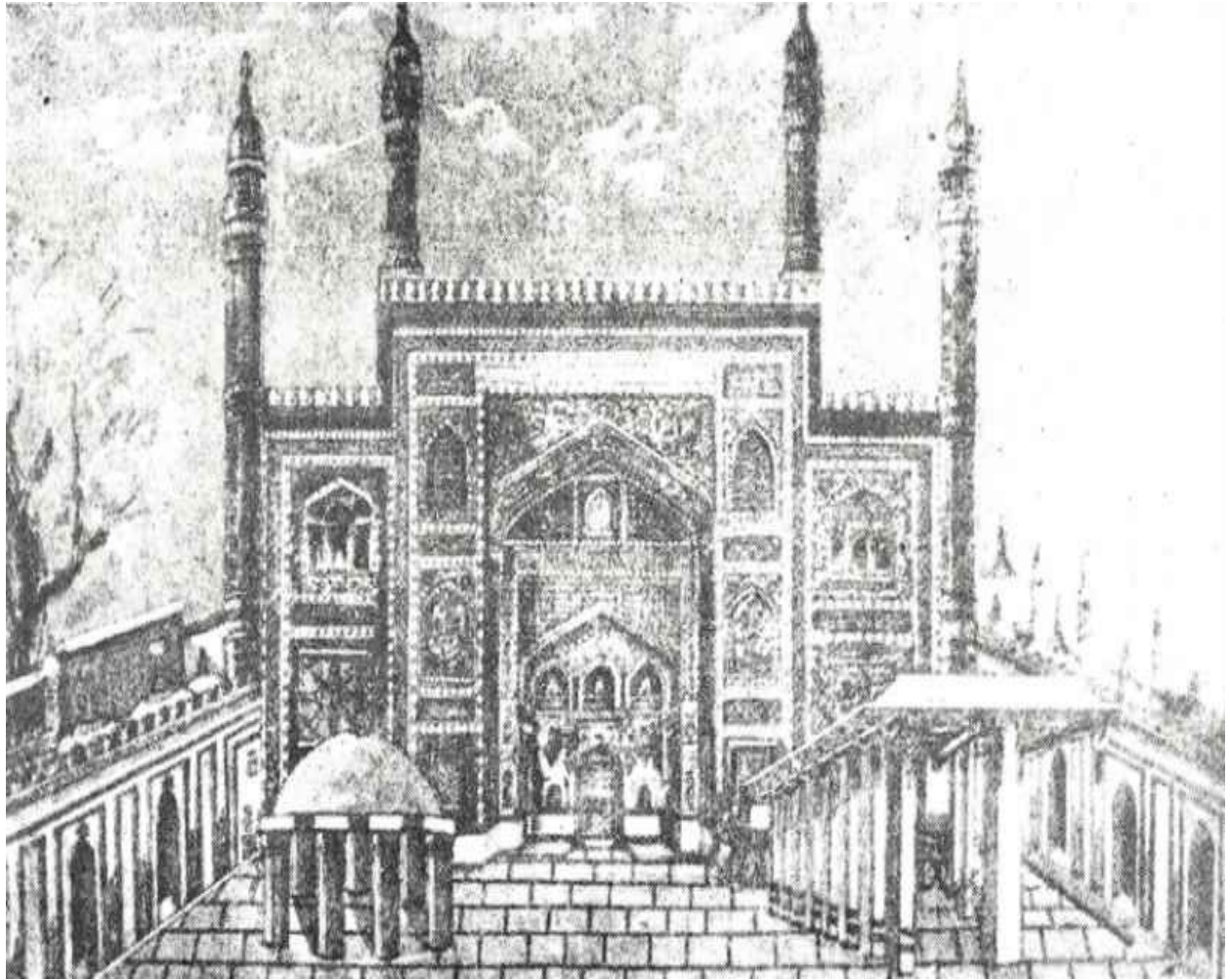
Devotee: “Sir, can it be said that the *dhamal* that is played here everyday is also at his command?”

Master: “Yes, it must be so. *Dhamal* was played in the presence of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. It has been started here by his command and we see it. As regards his instructions to observe his anniversary here, as it is done at Sewhan, let us see what pleases the Lord. Those who remain here may do that.”

The Master then became quiet. Everyone was surprised at what he said, but nobody dared to ask him a question. It was lunch time. Everybody took leave

of him and left for his place.

[**Note:** In about a month's time, the Master became seriously ill. As his end approached, he, too, like the Revered Master, called the names of his dear ones individually and assigned each to the care of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. He assigned the *sangat* and the kitchen (*bhandara*), too, to the care of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. The Master left his mortal frame on 10 December, 1957. The death anniversary of the Master is observed every year at Shanti Nagar according to Vikram Samwat in the month of *Margashirsa*, corresponding to the month of December. The practice of celebrating every year the death anniversary of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz was started at Shanti Nagar in 1959 according to the dates usually observed at Sewhan—18, 19 and 20 in the month of Shahban, Hijri Calendar. It so happened that after a few years the dates of the death anniversary of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz and that of the Master coincided and in that year the two programs were jointly organised. With this the two programs were merged into one programme for future also and since then all ceremonies or the formalities of the death anniversary of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz are observed on the occasion of the death anniversary of the Master. And the devotees are blessed by Qalandar Lal Shahbaz.]



Dargah Sahib Qalandar Lal Shahbaz, Sewhan (Sind)

MEETING 38

THE NATURE OF THE MIND

SHANTI NAGAR *17 March, 1957*

Today is the second day and the main day of the death anniversary celebration of Bhai Gobindram Sahib. On this day, the Master is ceremoniously consecrated when a saint ties to him a turban of ochre cloth. This year the participation and enthusiasm of the devotees was unprecedented. The Master, too, was in an unusual mood. By his inner pull, he had drawn, this time, a larger number of devotees, friends, and relatives, and therefore, there had been a gathering larger than the usual. Everybody was pleased to meet the Master.

In the morning session after the breakfast, there was a sadhu among the visitors who was a good singer. He sang the following song:

Mind is the country,
Where shall I go?
All belongs to me.
Mind is the beloved,
Mind is the friend,
Mind is the foe.
Mind is heaven,
Mind is hell,
Mind is lover,
Mind is beloved.
Dalpat¹ was relieved of the ego,
As yearning for the beloved grew,
And realisation dawned
That the Beloved is omniscient,
And the universe is His body.

¹ name of the poet

When the song ended, the Master addressed the gathering.

Master: “Sai Dalpat Rai was a famous Sufi saint of Sind. In this lyric he has given an excellent account of his mind. His preceptor called him a *majnu* (lover of a high order). Please note how by his endeavour the fakir has realised that the mind itself is God. He has realised That in everything.

“The fakir has realised that the mind and the field (the manifestation), or the seer and the seen, are identical and that nothing exists except God. He gives a wonderful account of Oneness—non-duality. His statements are highly enlightening; they reflect gyan. If a jiva engages himself in contemplation, and practises wholeheartedly according to the precept of the satguru, he enjoys immense bliss. In the concluding lines the fakir clearly states that a jiva realises non-duality only when he is relieved of the ego and meditates on the Beloved with love and devotion.”

The Master became quiet and silence prevailed for some time, as if he wanted to bestow silence upon the gathering. Everybody seemed to be enjoying bliss. Suddenly breaking the silence, someone put him a question.

Question: “Sir, it seems that the mind is the cause of everything. What is mind and how does it arise?”

Master: “A good question, indeed! Mind is non-entity and yet it is highly potent, because being an ideation or a modification (*phurna* or *sphurna*) in the Pure Consciousness (*Chinmatra Chetan Satta*), it bears the potency of the Consciousness. When the ideation (*sphurna*) ‘I am one, let me be many’ arose in Brahm, that ideation established itself as the mind and created the vast expanse and the great problems.”

Question: “Sir, what is the shape of the mind (*manas*)?”

Master: “There are various names for the mind (*manas*), such as *sankalpa* (ideation), *sphurna* (modification), *ahamkar* (ego), etc. As is the function performed by it at a time, so is the form or the name assigned to it. When a jiva initially thinks of anything, that thought is called an ideation (*sankalpa*) or a modification (*sphurna*). When he repeatedly thinks of this *sankalpa*, or contemplates it the mind is called *chitta*. Similarly, various other attributes are assigned to it according to its varying functions. Apparently, the mind has no shape or form. But when the primeval ideation arose in Atma, that ideation assumed itself to be an entity. Since there is only a fine distinction between the mind and Atma, the mind is called an aspect of Atma (*Atmaswaroop*).”

Question: “Sir, what are the functions or activities of the mind?”

Master: “The mind has innumerable functions. Its function is to establish the

non-existent as existent, or the unreal as the real. Whatever a jiva understands or thinks, is a function of the mind. At times it appears gross and at times subtle or highly subtle. It carries out its functions according to the Divine Will. In reality, however, nothing has been created.

“One noteworthy attribute of the mind is that it helps a jiva in his progress according to the way it is trained and directed. If it is directed towards spirituality, it helps a jiva in spiritual progress, and if it is directed towards material purposes, it helps in his material progress. You can see the material progress and development made by science. So, you can understand the functions of the mind when it is directed towards *maya*. The mind has two facets: it may lead a jiva on the right path or it may put him on the wrong path. A jiva attains nothing if the mind is not with him. All the credit goes to God. But a jiva wrongly gives credit to himself and feels that he has acted rightly or in a particular way or has decided not to act in a particular manner. Ego is yet another name for the mind. It is due to wrong understanding, or due to the influence of the ego, that a jiva gives credit to himself for the various actions. You must have often noticed that if your mind is fixed somewhere else, you do not perceive the events happening before you in spite of your physical presence there. What then happens to your ego, ‘I see, I hear’ in such a situation? You must, therefore, endeavour to forget your self and direct your mind to the spiritual path according to the instructions of the satguru so that the mind or the ideation (*sankalpa*) merges in the source from where it has arisen and salvation is attained.”

Question: “Sir, the mind is always wandering on account of ignorance and it is consumed with desire and hope. How to stop its wandering and bring it to quiescence and direct it towards Self-realisation?”

Master: “Three things—non-attachment (*vairagya*), contemplation (*vichar*) and practice (*abhyas*)—are essential to bring the mind to quiescence. A jiva must obtain guidance of an enlightened being and then endeavour accordingly so that his mind comes to rest. The mind attains quiescence by meditation and satsang. When a jiva is engaged in meditation, the mind attains peace and the intelligence expands. The mind can be controlled by contemplation. It wanders on account of desires (*vasana*). When desire is abandoned, the mind acquires stability and then it can be directed to the spiritual path. It is, otherwise, very difficult to achieve the stability of the mind.”

Question: “Sir, how to check the instability of the mind?”

Master: “Instability is the nature of the mind. Salvation means removal of the instability of the mind. Just as a river is ever flowing, so is the nature of the mind. What is required is only to change the direction of the mind from the world to God (*Nam*). The letters in the word ‘mind’ suggest that ‘me’ (mi) must be (n) nullified or negated by changing its (d) direction from the (d) devil—delusion of *maya*—to (d) divinity, that is, to Atma or Allah. The letters in the word mind (d,i,m,n) also suggest that by following the (d) downward path—the path of humility and self-abnegation—a jiva attains the status of (i,m,n) ‘I am not’. When it is ‘I am not’, then what is it? It is (d) divinity. By following the path of ‘I am not’, a jiva attains divinity, the divine state, the state of Oneness. The (d) downward path—the path of humility and self-abnegation—leads a jiva to (d) divinity and saves him from the (d) delusion that is *maya*.”

Question: “Sir, what is the easiest way to control mind so that one does not experience difficulties?”

Master: “I have already explained how to control the mind. It is not easy to control the mind.

“To begin with, the mind must be dealt with firmness. Then it should be subjected to sleeplessness and fasting, and thus it will change itself from being a foe into being a friend. It must be continually kept under strict watch so that it does not drift towards material gratification. By this practice, it gradually comes under control. A jiva is used to comforts and an easy life. Let him endeavour and undertake some practices. You say that you must not face difficulties or discomfort. Nothing can be gained without pains. One may, however, progress and attain the supreme goal without pains if, by virtue of one’s superior karma of the previous birth, one is bestowed with love and devotion (*prema bhakti, ishq*) at birth.

“The mind can be controlled by practice (*abhyas*) and love (*prema bhakti*). The practice includes pranayama. When the movement of prana is stopped, the mind is automatically stabilised. Or, when the mind is stabilised, the movement of prana stops automatically. Guidance regarding pranayama can be obtained from the satguru. Nothing can be attained without endeavour and practice.”

Question: “Sir, the mind refuses to come to rest. What should one do in such circumstances?”

Master: “Having sought a master (satguru) a jiva need not pay attention to the mind; rather he must concentrate on the precept of the satguru. If the jiva

is absorbed in the *gurushabd*, whatever be the state of the mind, the mind comes to rest in due course and he enjoys bliss.”

Question: “Sir, the mind is created in Atma, and Atma is pure. Why is the mind said to be impure then and why do evil ideas arise in the mind?”

Master: “The mind has no impurity of its own. But the jiva has forgotten Atma, and that is the first attribute of impurity assigned to the mind. Due to this forgetfulness and due to the forces of the past karma, the mind of the jiva is directed outward and then it creates all sorts of diversities. Impurities are thus added to the mind. The mind, nevertheless, warns the jiva from time to time to arise and awake, to think and to contemplate and to take to the spiritual path, but the jiva pays no heed to it. As is the direction the jiva gives to the mind, so does the mind, by its force, create the objects before him. By itself the mind, like Atma, is without a name and a form. When it is directed outwards, it gives rise to names and forms. When the jiva surrenders himself to the wise (the enlightened) they suggest to him how to follow introvision, put the mind in the right direction and thus attain the Atmic bliss. There is a fine difference between the two approaches. When the jiva changes from extrovision to introvision, then the same mind which was said to be impure, becomes absolutely pure. It is on account of the forgetfulness of the Atmic state and extrovision of the mind that the jiva understands everything to the contrary. In reality, nothing exists except Atma. The jiva gets this realisation only on achieving introvision. When the mind is directed outward, it creates the universe and gives rise to the conviction of reality in it, but when the same mind is directed inward, the universe that was perceived as real is perceived as unreal. The mind is highly potent. There is no distinction between the mind and Atma.

“When the mind is quiescent and is merged in Atma, there is no creation of the universe. What the jiva is required to do is to undertake purushartha and seek the Truth. Creation of the universe and its dissolution are the functions of the mind.

“The jiva is influenced by the sort of company or association he has. As is the company sought by the jiva, so is the nature assumed by the mind. The mind by itself is not at fault. Sultan Bahu has said:

A breath in forgetfulness
Is a breath of *kafir*,
So it is ordained

By the benign *murshid*.
Getting the *sukhun*¹,
I am awakened,
My mind is now
Absorbed in That.
I have surrendered myself
To the beloved,
I am now in love,
And enjoy the bliss.
Bahu² now understands,
The dead cannot die,
And has now realised
The true purport.”

1 the *gurushabd*, the holy word, received at the time of initiation

2 name of the poet

Question: “Sir, what is the method by which the mind is directed inward so that the non-existence of the world is realised?”

Master: “The non-existence of the world is realised after very hard endeavour. The jiva must constantly contemplate that the world is illusory and is merely ideational. When after intense and prolonged contemplation the jiva perceives the world as ideational, he develops introvision and then he constantly meditates on *Brahmsatta*—the Pure Consciousness—and progresses. When the jiva contemplates Atma, on firmly developing introvision, he attains the Atmaswaroop state. Practice always triumphs. As is the thinking or contemplation of a jiva, so is the form (*swaroop*) assumed by him. If he contemplates the world, he has the perception of the ideational universe and if he is engaged in *Atmabhyas*, the illusion of the universe merges in Atma and he experiences only the pure Atma.”

Question: “Sir, how to redirect the mind from the universe towards Atma? The mind is not under our control. No sooner do we think of a spiritual subject or of gyan than the mind runs in the opposite direction. We feel helpless. What then should we do?”

Master (*with a smile*): “Please speak the truth sometimes and tell what efforts you have made to direct the mind on the spiritual path. Have you

surrendered yourself to the enlightened? Have you sacrificed sleep? Have you trained yourself in fasting? Have you controlled your body? Have you done any of these things so that the mind comes under your control? Shah Abdul Latif has recommended a prescription for controlling the mind. If you try that, your mind will become your friend. He says:

Remain silent,
Do not move your lips,
Shut your eyes,
Close your ears,
Do not fill your belly
With food and water.
You will then realise the image
That is in your mind.

“The mind can be redirected to the spiritual path by *purushartha* and by following the instructions of the enlightened beings. Withdraw it from the mortal world and direct it to the immortal, and it will gradually change its course. Two methods are followed to tame a bird or to force a confession from a culprit. These are: denial of food and water, and denial of sleep. If the mind is subjected to these two conditions and is also led on the path according to the instructions of the enlightened beings, then by the grace of God the mind takes the right direction. In any event, the jiva gets redemption with the help of the mind only; all that is needed is to get the necessary guidance from the enlightened and to conduct the mind accordingly. Just as the mind is the agent for material attainments, so it is also the true guide for progress on the spiritual path. This has been testified by Sai Dalpatrai in the lyric where he says, ‘The mind is the country.....’

“If you are not able to do that much, forget about the mind. Do only one thing: get *gurushabd* from your satguru, use it as the rein on the horse—the mind—and remain firmly seated in practice at a place. The rein—the *gurushabd*—will eventually check and redirect the mind and put it on the right path. Will you do that much? There is one more remedy. While you are engaged in the routine activities—eating, drinking, walking, sleeping, moving—remove from your mind, with the help of the *gurushabd*, all the rubbish and impurities of desires, *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*, and make it pure. Thus it will come under your control. There is nothing wrong with the mind;

we have given it a free rein.”

Question: “Sir, can the mind be controlled by yoga?”

Master: “Yes, why not? The scriptures suggest two simple yogic practices for controlling the mind: first, pranayama and, second, control of desire and *vasana*. Below the naval is a *chakra* where *Kundalini* rests. It is a conceptual *chakra*; it cannot be perceived with the gross senses. Having obtained guidance of the satguru when the jiva practises pranayama and casts his mode of living according to the instructions of the satguru, then the mind comes under control. The instability of the mind depends upon the movement of the prana. When a jiva practises pranayama, his mind gradually comes under control and he enjoys bliss.

“The other method envisages checking desires and *vasana*. As a jiva endeavours and succeeds in checking his desires and *vasana*, the movement of his prana slows down and in due course he automatically practises controlling the prana. Sufis call it *dam habas*. A jiva can control his mind by either of these methods.”

Question: “Sir, which is the easiest way to cross the ocean of the universe (*sansara*)?”

Master: “The simplest method to cross the ocean of the universe envisages contemplation (*vichar*), non-attachment (*vairagya*) and practice (*abhyas*). To begin with, a jiva must cultivate non-attachment or dispassion by contemplation. When by contemplating on the scriptures in satsang the mind is purified, non-attachment develops. Then after getting the precept of the satguru the jiva must practise and adopt a way of life in accordance with that, and thus attain the supreme state. So long as he has not developed these attributes, he drifts and sinks in the ocean of the *sansara*. When, by practice and contemplation, he realises his true state, he is relieved of all the sufferings and crosses the ocean of the universe.”

Question: “Sir, when does a jiva develop inclination for non-attachment, contemplation and practice?”

Master: “These qualities arise in a jiva who has the qualities of japa and tapa, by virtue of his past karma, or who reflects on the saying of scriptures and saints. Such a jiva is fit for gyan and he attains the Atmatattva and always remains happy.”

Question: “Sir, why does a jiva forget God (*Paramatma*)?”

Master: “On account of ignorance, a jiva assumes himself to be a body and considers himself the doer of everything and forgets *Paramatma*. Forgetting

the Truth (*Nam*), as he develops the ego-feeling in the body and remains oblivious of *Paramatma*, he suffers still more. But when he conceives the world as unreal, then dispassion and discrimination arise in him and he develops interest in spiritualism (*Nam*). Thus practising continually, he gets united with *Nam* and enjoys bliss. So long as gyan does not arise in a jiva, he forgets *Paramatma* and assumes the body as a reality and remains entangled in material desires.”

Question: “Sir, when does a jiva develop interest in *Atmabhyas* (spiritual practice)?”

Master: “Initially, when a jiva conceives the world illusory like a dream, he develops disinterest in the world and then non-attachment or dispassion arises in him. Thereafter, by associating himself with the saints and by practising according to the scriptures, he develops the power of contemplation. As the power of contemplation is strengthened in him, he feels no interest in the material objects and these objects appear insipid to him. Then his chitta is directed towards *Atmabhyas*. Or, when after obtaining guruhabd he practises that over a period of time and is engaged in contemplation, he develops interest in *Atmabhyas*.”

Question: “Sir, you say that a jiva must consider the world to be illusory, like a dream. How can one consider the objects of the world to be like a dream when they are perceived as real?”

Master: “It has been said in Guru Granth Sahib:

*Jaisa sapna ar pekhna,
Aise jag ko jan,
In men kacch sach nahin,
Nanak bin Bhagwan.
(As you see a dream,
Know the world to be such like,
Nothing real there is,
Except God, O Nanak.)*

“The waking world must be taken as a dream. As the dream objects are illusory, so is the waking world. Except God, everything is illusory and unreal.”

Question: “Sir, kindly explain more clearly what waking and dream states are.”

Master: “In reality, the dream state and the waking state are of the same nature. A dream is assumed as real in that state only—during sleep—but it is accepted as illusory and unreal when one wakes from the dream. Likewise, the waking state, too, is illusory. As a jiva wakes in the Atmic state, or attains enlightenment (gyan), then the waking universe is realised as illusory like a dream. Thus the waking state and the dream state are alike. Whereas the waking state is a dream of a longer duration, and so it is perceived as real, the dream lasts for a short while and so it is perceived as unreal. When all the objects of the world are perceived as illusory like the dream-objects and the illusion of the world is removed, then Atma is experienced as permeating everything.”

Question: “Sir, what are the different states of a jiva? Kindly explain each in detail.”

Master: “There are five states of a jiva: (i) waking (*jagrat*) (ii) dream (*swapna*), (iii) deep sleep (*sushupti*), (iv) *turiya*, and (v) *turiya-atit*.

“Having forgotten Paramatma, the jiva assumes the illusory universe as real. This is the waking state of the jiva.

“When the jiva moves from the waking state to the dream state, all objects of the world are experienced as non-existent and the waking world is taken as unreal and ephemeral.

“When he moves to the *sushupti* (deep sleep) state, the waking world and the dream world disappear. Neither of these worlds is experienced in that state.

“When the jiva transcends these three states, he attains enlightenment (gyan), loses duality and realises the state of oneness. This is the *turiya* state, also called the *jivanmukta* state.

“When the jiva goes deep into the *turiya* state and is ever established in Atma, and his illusion of the universe is totally removed, he attains the *turiya-atit* state, also called the *videhamukta* state. This state cannot be described in words. The disposition or the spirit of the jiva at that state is as pure as *akash*; he is free from the illusion of the universe and he is ever established in Atma. He becomes just the witness and his functioning is guided by nature. He undertakes no purushartha and his needs are naturally fulfilled according to *prarabdha*. He is not bound by karma. He is in equanimity in pain and pleasure, in joy and sorrow, and in loss and gain. He is free from the feelings of *I* and *mine*. He perceives nothing with the feelings of duality. He sees That—the Atma—in everything and he is always in the

state of bliss.”

Question: “Sir, how can a jiva attain the Atmic state?”

Master: “A jiva attains the Atmic state when he is relieved of the ego.”

Question: “Sir, what is ego?”

Master: “The feeling of ‘I’ is the ego. There are two kinds of ego—first, the ego of ignorance which pertains to the gross state, and second, the ego of enlightenment which pertains to Atma or Allah. When a jiva forgets Atma, the ego is attached to the body and the jiva assumes himself as an entity; it is an error of understanding. But when he considers himself to be Atmaswaroop and realises that *I am That*, that ego is beneficial, and it is permissible.”

Question: “Sir, how long does the ego last in a jiva?”

Master: “The ego lasts in a jiva so long as his ideation (*sankalpa*) does not merge into the primeval ideation (*adi sankalpa*). The satguru guides the jiva, so that by practice, he can realise the merger of his sankalpa into the sankalpa of Atma. At that stage the jiva becomes *Ishwara-roop* and egoless. Thereafter, his ideations do not pertain to the gross body and he exists in the egoless state.”

Question: “Sir, why does the ego arise in a jiva?”

Master: “The ego arises when the primeval state is forgotten and a jiva considers the gross body of the five elements to be a reality and an end in itself. The benign satguru helps the jiva to realise that he is not the body. The satguru directs him to practise firmly what he truly is so that he may realise what is real and what is unreal.”

Question: “Sir, how is the ego annihilated?”

Master: “A jiva must constantly contemplate ‘what am I, what are the senses and what is the universe?’ and being the witness he must realise that ‘I am distinct from everything else.’ He must realise that there is neither ‘I’ nor ‘you’ in ‘me’. With this contemplation and practice, his ego is annihilated.”

Question: “Sir, what are the advantages of the annihilation of the ego?”

Master: “He who values quiescence and bliss and desires the true pleasure would not ask such a question. I would say that you must put all efforts—even at the risk of your life—and struggle hard to control the mind and annihilate the ego. You will then come to know what you realise by that. No one can describe the bliss that is earned after the mind is controlled. Kings and emperors have sacrificed royal pleasures to seek the conquest of the mind. Certainly, they must have been guided by their satgurus to seek pleasures higher than the royal comforts. And having realised the higher

pleasures, the king-turned-recluse did not seek material pleasures again. They, who have conquered their minds, are relieved of their ego.”

Question: “Sir, isn’t it egoistic to say *Ana-al-Haq* or *Aham Brahm Asmi* (I am God). The sacred word ‘Om’, too, has a similar connotation. Doesn’t that word harm the jiva? Why should we practise or meditate on such words?”

Master: “No harm comes to a jiva if he practises these words (ideas) or meditates on them by remembering the Primordial State. But the jiva is certainly harmed if the practice is undertaken in the context of the illusory body. These words refer to *Sat*—the Truth. If the jiva conceives himself as *Sat*, and engages himself in the practice, he merges in *Sat*. With this practice, the mind of the jiva, or his thought process, goes beyond the gross objects and he merges in *Sat*. Even if he bears the ego of that nature, he must be complimented. Until the jiva attains that state, he must, while retaining knowledge (gyan) within, overtly bear the disposition of *bhakti* or devotion.”

Question: “Sir, in what manner is a jiva harmed by the ego?”

Master: “The ego of the gross state which pertains to the gross body, generally leads a jiva to failure. But in case the jiva surrenders everything to God and considers loss and gain as the gifts of God, he will never be unhappy. The jiva experiences pain and pleasure when he considers himself to be the doer and acts with ego. When he gets pleasures, he gets inflated. And when he faces suffering, impurities like lust, anger, avarice and attachments arise in him and thus he is greatly harmed. But if he surrenders himself to God and acts without ego, he is not harmed at all. So long as the ego lasts, the jiva does not get salvation and he wanders in the cycle of rebirths; that is a grave harm.”

Question: “Sir, by what efforts is the ego annihilated?”

“You are nought,
Be nought,
Earn nought,

Master: And with the help of *La*¹,
Break the worldly bonds.
Then will be revealed to you
The secrets of the Beloved.

¹ non-existence

“In these lines, the fakir has explained the truth and the methodology. He says to the jiva that he is nothing in reality, he does not exist and therefore he must be a non-entity, or, in other words, he must lose the ego. He must earn nought, that is, he must adopt the way of life of that order. Since he is a non-entity, he must, with this disposition, break his bonds with the world. When he achieves that, the secrets of the Beloved are revealed to him. When he surrenders himself to the wise (the enlightened) they tell him what he really is. Attaining the understanding of this secret, he must realise the Truth and merge his self in the Truth.”

Question: “Sir, doesn’t a jiva become like a corpse when his ego is lost. What can he do in that case or what is his utility?”

Master: “The ego has two facets—one of dependence or bondage (*muhtaj*), and the other of freedom or independence (*la-muhtaj*). It is the ego in both the states. The ego that is free is not harmful; it is rather beneficial. But if a jiva assuming the body as an entity identifies himself with the body and develops the feeling of ‘I’ about it, he is greatly harmed. If, however, by obtaining the precept from an enlightened being, he maintains the ego by Atmabhyas, he realises *Haq* (the Truth). The ego that is the cause of bondage or is loaded with desires for material gratification is very baneful. But the ego that is free from *vasana* and desires, brings liberation. According to the scriptures the Atmic ego (*Atma-ahamkar*) is admissible. The jiva whose mind is free from desires and from the feelings of joy and sorrow, is liberated. The state of even-mindedness in all situations indicates liberation. The jiva who is even-minded is not harmed by the ego. A jiva becomes a corpse only when he is relieved of all actions. What is envisaged here is that he should be relieved of the ego or in other words, he should lose desire while he is engaged in various mundane activities. That is what is meant by the loss of the ego.”

Question: “Sir, how does one know that a jiva is free from ego?”

Master: “A jiva who is free from ego, considers the world and the ideas of the world as illusory. He is always firmly engaged in Atmabhyas or is absorbed in Allah and entertains no desire for the illusory objects. He who is free from desires never becomes angry and always remains in peace and absorbed in Allah. If at all such a jiva is seen being angry with someone, it should be assumed that the attitude of anger has been assumed by him for the welfare of the individual concerned, and that by himself he is ever in equanimity within. A jiva who is free from the feelings of joy and sorrow, or

of pain and pleasure, must be assumed to be free from ego.”

It was eleven o'clock and the Master stopped there. He said that if there were more questions, these might be raised the next day and then requested Swami Yogiraj, who had come from Bombay, to take his turn.

Swami Yogiraj spoke for about ninety minutes. He talked about the various yogic practices (postures) and about how pranayama with *gurushabd* is practised.

When the talk was over, arrangements were made for serving lunch. The Master sat in a chair and the devotees on mats before him. They took food in batches. There was total silence and no one uttered a word in this process. The Master watched everybody. After the lunch, the devotees retired for a siesta. The Master, too, had his meals and a rest thereafter. Tea was served to all at 4 p.m.

The annual ceremony of consecrating the Master by *dastarband* ceremony, when a saint ties on the Master's head a turban of ochre cloth with appropriate rites, was started at 5:30 p.m. The compound (covered with overhead cloth) was fully packed with devotees. Everyone had a garland in his/her hands. An ecstatic (*mast*) fakir who had come from outside on that occasion, performed the ceremony of tying the turban to the Master. The Master was in samadhi at that time. When, before long, he opened his eyes, all the devotees lined up in front of him. Everyone garlanded him and knelt in reverence before him. The Master gently patted every devotee on his/her head. It was for the first time that he had done so. On such occasions in the past when the devotees had garlanded him and knelt before him, the Master used to remain in meditation with his eyes closed and his head bent down. On this occasion this year, however, he had openly blessed all the devotees. There was a magic touch in his patting the devotees on their heads and backs and everybody was exhilarated and excited. Devotional singing had continued throughout this programme. The ceremony ended at 6:30 p.m. Two devotees helped the Master to rise and led him into the hall where he was seated in a chair. All the devotees followed him into the hall. *Arati* was offered at sunset. This was followed by the beating of drums (*naqqara*). The dinner was served as usual. Some devotees went to sleep and some listened to devotional singing that continued the whole night.

MEETING 39

IGNORANCE AND SELF REALISATION

SHANTI NAGAR 18 March, 1957

Today was the third day of the celebration of the death anniversary of Bhai Gobindram Sahib. The devotees had assembled in the hall by 4 a.m. The drum (*naqqara*) was played for half an hour. The Master then addressed the gathering.

Master: “Our discussion yesterday was incomplete. You had some more questions to ask. Please raise them now.”

Question: “Sir, what should a jiva who has developed interest in spiritualism, do?”

Master: “The jiva must remain in satsang to foster this interest and ensure that he does not break away from there. Abandoning all mundane functions, he must regularly attend satsang, wherever that might be. He will then come to realise that salvation is not possible without a guru. While searching for a satguru, when he feels attracted and impressed by someone, he must seek initiation under him and get precept from him. Thereafter, forgetting the self, he must engage himself in practice according to the precept.”

Question: “Sir, what should one do if the mind is little inclined towards satsang and good actions?”

Master: “A jiva must fully endeavour to escape from the quagmire of *sansara*. He must remember that he is a human being and not an animal. God has granted him the gift of intelligence. He must remain in satsang so that his intelligence expands. He must use discrimination and undertake *purushartha*.”

Question: “Sir, what is *purushartha*?”

Master: “The word *purushartha* is made up of two words—*purusha* and *artha*. *Purusha* refers to Atma and *artha* indicates what is done for the sake of Atma. The endeavour for the realisation of Atma or Allah is called *purushartha*. To stabilise the thought in *Nam* according to the instructions of the satguru is *purushartha*.”

Question: “Sir, what are the types of *purushartha* and what is gained by it?”

Master: “*Purushartha* is of two kinds—one for material attainment and the other for spiritual attainment. Living according to the instructions of the

scriptures and of the satguru, he who undertakes *purushartha* for spiritual attainment, attains the Atmic state. But he who acts to the contrary and endeavours for the ephemeral, attains nothing. What a jiva may attain depends on the way of his life. A jiva who, with firm determination, acts on the right path, succeeds in the world. He who endeavours in the direction of Atma attains Atma and then he has no desire for any material gain and he attains to the supreme state. This attainment is the result of the *purushartha*. Saints and scriptures give direction and guidance; it is for the seeker to strive and endeavour. Having obtained the precept, the seeker who does not endeavour, draws a blank. Nothing is attained without *purushartha*. He is a great fool who, being lazy, says that things would happen as ordained by the Lord. A jiva attains nothing without endeavour.”

Question: “Sir, what should be the *purushartha* of a jiva in the initial stages?”

Master: “First, a jiva should engage himself in good actions and act according to his dharma. Second, he should abjure evil actions. Third, he must keep company with saints and reflect on what is said in the scriptures. Fourth, remaining in solitude he must reflect on his good and bad tendencies. Abandoning the evil tendencies he must reinforce the good ones. As he thinks on these lines, he develops discrimination and with that such other good qualities as peace, sobriety, dispassion and contemplation develop in him. In this manner the jiva gradually progresses towards the Atmic state and he is gradually liberated from the bonds of the world.”

Question; “Sir, what is karma?”

Master: “Karma is another name for *vasana*. *Vasana* is caused by the mind. Where the mind is, karma, too, is there. *Vasana* does not arise in a jiva who is always established in the Atmic state because his mind is annihilated and so karma does not occur there. Such a jiva ever enjoys the supreme state.”

Question: “Sir, what is *vasana* and how is it annihilated?”

Master: “*Vasana* is an aspect of *sankalpa*. *Sankalpa* is the subtle form of *vasana* and *vasana* is the gross form of *sankalpa*. What is *sankalpa* at the subtle level is *vasana* at the gross level.

“Atmagyan is the only way for the annihilation of *vasana*. When Atmagyan arises, the illusion of the universe disappears and *vasana*, too, disappears.”

Question: “Sir, how to destroy one’s desires so that true happiness is attained?”

Master: “In order to destroy desire, one must contemplate that the world is illusory and, therefore, there is nothing to desire in the world. Except Allah, everything else is illusory; it is not right to desire anything when the world is just illusory. When nothing exists except Allah, who is there to desire and what is there to be desired? Desires disappear with this kind of contemplation and thus the jiva attains true happiness. In any case, it is not right to desire because desire arises on the plane of duality.”

Question: “Sir, what happens to jivas who are not inclined towards Atma?”

Master: “The jivas who are not inclined towards Atma, keep wandering and undergo great sufferings. Abandoning the supreme purpose (*paramartha*), the jivas who are absorbed in the gratification of the senses, are not saved from sufferings. Those who consider themselves happy when they are away from the Atmic state, and also those who have abandoned Atmic discipline (Atmabhyas), ultimately face extinction.”

Question: “Sir, what is that following which a jiva does not revert to suffering?”

Master: “A jiva does not revert to suffering after realising Atma. Atma can be realised by meditation. The first requirement on the spiritual path is absolute faith and firm conviction that the jiva will certainly attain salvation by following the precept of the satguru. And he does get salvation with this firm conviction.”

Question: “Sir, what spirit or belief must a jiva firmly have to progress on the spiritual path?”

Master: “A jiva must firmly believe that the universe is unreal and illusory though it appears as real. Only Atma is real; all else is ephemeral. When a jiva has this firm conviction, the spirit of renunciation develops in him and he is relieved of the ego. A seeker must abandon all desires and be free from the tendencies of love and hate. He must engage himself in good actions only overtly but at heart he must remain free from all attachments and be firmly engaged in Atmabhyas only. It is by this method alone that he can progress and enjoy Atmananda.”

Question: “Sir, what happens to those whose *chitta* is engaged in material gratification and pride, and who do not attain Atmagyan?”

Master: “The jivas whose thoughts are fixed entirely on material gratification, perform many actions with pomp and show, but these foolish people cannot attain Atmagyan.

“The jivas who do not attain Atmagyan due to ignorance and lack of faith,

and whose minds are always in doubt and who cannot eradicate their ignorance, are like animals. They are under illusion on account of their desires and they wander in the cycle of rebirths.”

Question: “Sir, what is the cause of ignorance and how can it be removed?”

Master: “Desire and forgetfulness of Atma are the causes of ignorance. So long as desire is not eliminated, gyan does not arise. Desire is destroyed with Atmabhyas. Quiescence is attained by contemplation and practice. When quiescence of *chitta* is attained, desire and *vasana* disappear and ignorance is removed.”

Question: “Sir, what is the distinction between *vasana* and desire (*trishna*)?”

Master: “*Vasana* is the latent or subtle aspect of desire (*trishna*). *Trishna* is the manifest or gross aspect of *vasana*. When *rajas guna* is associated with *trishna*, actions occur. Firmness of thought is essential for the manifestation of desires; it is only then that the desire is fulfilled. The word ‘desire’ pertains to material objects and not to spiritual attainment.”

Question: “Sir, why do the worldly-minded people not have peace within? How and when can they attain tranquility of mind?”

Master: “As the worldly-minded people endeavour for material gratification, they get afflicted with innumerable ideations. Until a jiva eradicates, by his endeavours, the ideations within, he cannot attain tranquility, nor can he enjoy the bliss of salvation. *Vasana* is the cause of sufferings. It is because of *vasana* that a jiva does not attain quiescence and he remains wandering, deprived of the bliss. When with yogic practices, the *vasana* of a jiva is eliminated and the mind is purified, the jiva attains supreme tranquility and he enjoys Atmic bliss within. When he attains this state of tranquility, he is not affected by suffering; he becomes *shantiswaroop*”.

Question: “Sir, what is a *sankalpa* or *sphurna*? How is a jiva affected by it?”

Master: “A *sankalpa* or *sphurna* is an ideation or a modification naturally arising in the pure consciousness that is the Self and the primeval state. The feeling of ‘I’ is the primeval ideation of the jiva, and by its force the senses come into operation. The jiva attains salvation when this ideation is destroyed with *purushartha*.

“*Sankalpa* is an aspect of God and, therefore, there is no distinction between God and *sankalpa*. The *sankalpa* can do what God can do. The distinction, however, lies in the purity of the mind and the will power of the jiva entertaining the *sankalpa*. There is a vast difference between the *sankalpa* of God and that of a jiva. God is omnipotent and, therefore, all his *sankalpas*

materialise, whereas the sankalpas of the jivas materialise according to the strength of the individual jivas. Sankalpa is the nature of God. As God is primeval, so the sankalpa is primeval. Attainments on the spiritual path depend on the strength of the sankalpa for *paramartha*. As is the nature of the firm sankalpa conceived according to one's intelligence, so is the perception attained. But in reality, nothing has been created—neither the sankalpas nor the material objects. Nothing exists except Allah. It has been stated in the scriptures that Brahm is real and the manifest universe is illusory. It is wrong to conceive of anything except Allah. When a jiva contemplates Paramatma, or when he bears the sankalpa of Paramatma, and this sankalpa becomes firm, the jiva attains the supreme state—the state of Parmatma-swaroop. What more can be desired than that?”

Question: “Sir, what is the cause of the arousal of a sankalpa?”

Master: “*Vasana* is the cause of the arousal of a sankalpa, and the instability of the mind is the cause of *vasana*. By obeying the instructions of the satguru when a seeker learns the required ways and means and tries to control prana with pranayama, the instability of mind disappears and the arousal of sankalpa stops. Or, when with endeavour, the instability of mind is stopped or the arousal of ideations is checked, then the movement of prana stops automatically. The three things—the instability of mind, the arousal of sankalpa, the movement of prana—are interrelated and when a jiva succeeds in checking any one of these, he attains salvation. When desires are stopped with these endeavours, the jiva discriminates between the real and the unreal, and then abandoning the unreal, he seeks the real and in due course attains the goal. In other words, he attains the state of Atmananda.”

Question: “Sir, where does a sankalpa in a jiva arise from?”

Master: “It is primeval ideation (*adi sankalpa*) that has arisen from Ishwara. Primevally, Atma is non-ideational. In the quiescent Atma arose a modification, the primeval modification, which the Vedas describe as ‘I am one, let me be many.’ This modification resulted in the creation of the universe. The sankalpa or ideation of Ishwara is considered to be *Sat* and, therefore, any sankalpa arising in Atma materialises by assuming names and forms. We, too, are a part of that. If we attain to the state of *Sat*, our sankalpas, too, would materialise. This is possible when by Atmabhyas we merge our illusory ideations (*anatmic sankalpas*) in the primeval ideation (*adi sankalpa*).”

Question: “Sir, though ideations (sankalpas) continue to arise, how is it that

some materialise and some do not?”

Master: “All ideations (sankalpas) of a jiva do not materialise, because the success of an ideation is not possible unless it is a firm ideation (sankalpa). You must have realised that when you pursue an idea vigorously, disregarding the ordeals and sufferings involved, you succeed in attaining that idea. Other ideas fade out without any attainment. Seekers who vigorously pursue the spiritual path and endeavour very hard, succeed. In some cases jivas do face failures in spite of their efforts because their ideations (sankalpas) are not firm and there are doubts in their minds. Or, the failure may be the result of the arousal of the subtle ego in them.”

Question: “Sir, what are the limits for an ideation?”

Master: “The limit of an ideation is infinite. As is the expansion of the ideation of a jiva, so does his universe expand; there is no limit to it.”

Question: “Sir, what happens to a jiva who has not eliminated his ideations (sankalpa)?”

Master: “The jiva who does not abandon his ideations in accordance with the injunctions of saints and scriptures and fails to attain purity within, and who gets entangled in the web of desires, keeps wandering and he does not attain quiescence.”

Question: “Sir, how to cast one’s life according to the injunctions of saints and scriptures?”

Master: “One must maintain a close watch over one’s mind and senses in accordance with the instructions of sages and scriptures, or in other words, one must avoid what is forbidden by sages and scriptures. When one lives in this manner, one goes beyond pain and pleasure and is unaffected by anything and thus one attains the state of supreme bliss.”

Question: “Sir, what is the distinction between *sankalpa* (ideation), *kalpana* (imagination) and *karma* (action)?”

Master: “Kalpana (imagination) is the intermediary state between sankalpa and karma. When chitta-modifications or ideations arise in a jiva, his mind gets fixed on the ideations and as these ideations or sankalpas are continually repeated within, *rajas guna* is aroused in the jiva. This produces movement in the jiva and it leads him to actions (karma). Ideation (sankalpa) is the basis of action (karma). There is no action if there is no ideation in a jiva.”

Question: “Sir, how does the illusion of the universe arise and how is this illusion lifted?”

Master: “The illusion of the universe arises because of the forgetfulness of

Atma. It is removed with Atmagyan and by no other means. A jiva attains quiescence when the illusion is removed.”

Question: “Sir, how is Atmagyan attained?”

Master: “Atmagyan cannot be attained by any means except contemplation (*vichar*). Good actions help in attaining the purity of the mind but not in attaining Atmagyan. Gyan is attained when one firmly practises with contemplation.”

Question: “Sir, if the entire universe is illusory, how is it perceived?”

Master: “The universe is experienced on account of ignorance and it disappears on contemplation. Just as a child perceives a ghost in his shadow and is frightened by it but when he gets right understanding, he recognises the shadow correctly, so is the universe perceived on account of non-contemplation and it disappears on contemplation. In reality, the universe does not exist; if it were real, it would not vanish.”

Question: “When does a jiva get redemption and attain the supreme bliss (*paramananda*)?”

Master: “Until a jiva attains *paramananda*, he must have the attitude of vairagya and be firmly engaged in Atmabhyas. A perfect master (*poorn satguru*) is needed to help him attain *paramananda*, the supreme bliss. When the jiva obeys his satguru and lives according to his precept, he develops vairagya and becomes eager to engage himself in practice. And when he develops an intense urge for the Atmic state, he attains the supreme bliss.”

Question: “Sir, how can *avidya* (ignorance) be annihilated?”

Master: “Knowledge (*vidya*) annihilates ignorance (*avidya*). Gyan destroys agyan. Just as darkness does not vanish without light, so ignorance (*avidya*) does not disappear without knowledge (*vidya*). Contemplation is another name for *vidya*, and non-contemplation for ignorance (*avidya*). When ignorance disappears, or contemplation arises, a jiva loses taste for material gratification. Such a jiva always remains in bliss.”

Question: “Sir, what is contemplation (*vichar*)? When and how does the spirit of contemplation arise in a jiva? What should a jiva contemplate?”

Master: “The endeavour (*purushartha*) by which Truth (*Sat*) is attained is called contemplation. When the mind is pure, the spirit of contemplation arises. The first requirement is that a jiva must be in satsang. He must carefully listen to saints and scriptures, fully assimilate their instructions and abide by them, and remaining in solitude reflect over the purport of these instructions. In this manner, contemplation (*vichar*) arises in the jiva; it is

gradually reinforced and strengthened, his intelligence (*antahkaran*) expands and then Atmagyan arises in him. The jiva must contemplate how the supreme state (*param pad*) can be attained. He must reflect on what is *Sat* (the Real) and what is *asat* (the unreal). He who, by contemplation, discriminates between the Real (*Sat*) and the unreal (*asat*), and by abandoning dependence on the unreal strives for the Real is said to be a man of reflection or contemplation. Bliss is where contemplation is, and sufferings prevail where there is no contemplation.”

Question: “Sir, what is intellect (*buddhi*)? Can Atma be realised with intellect?”

Master: “Buddhi (intellect) is another name for *vivek* (discrimination) by which a jiva understands what *Sat* (the Real) is and what *asat* (the unreal) is. That, too, is a function of the mind. When the mind is directed to the right path and is engaged in thinking, it is called *buddhi* (intellect).

“Intellect, too, is finite. It can help in renunciation of the unreal and in progress towards the Truth. But it is ineffective so far as realisation of Atma is concerned.”

Question: “Sir, how to go beyond the sufferings of birth and death?”

Master: “So long as a jiva has not attained gyan, he is not saved from the sufferings of rebirth and death. Gyan is attained with contemplation and practice. The jivas who forsake contemplation and practice, wander in the cycle of death and rebirth and undergo immense sufferings; they fail to attain the Atmic state. Until a jiva realises the Self, he wanders in the cycle of rebirth. When he gets the precept from the satguru and learns the secret from him, and fully engages himself in practice accordingly, he attains to that state and realises the goal. A jiva must first renounce vasanas which are the cause of his wandering and suffering in the cycle of rebirths.”

Question: “Sir, how does a jiva die? Since the body becomes inert after death, how does it reap the fruits of its actions (karma)?”

Master: “The body functions with the force of prana and apana, which are linked with the primeval breath. When a jiva is about to die, the prana gradually withdraws from the body and then the body remains as a corpse. The jiva remains unconscious for some time after death and thereafter he experiences time (*kal*), space (*desh*) and activity (*kriya*) in accordance with his *vasana* (*latent tendency*) and he has the cognition of a body. He then experiences joy and sorrow with the new body, according to his past deeds.

“Death is of three types—of the ignorant, of the seeker and of the gyani.

The jivas who are ignorant experience while leaving the body, immense sorrow on account of their separation from the material objects. The seekers are neither in the category of the ignorant nor in that of the gyani. After death, they (the seekers) attain to the plane (*lok*) of the deity on whom they had meditated. The jivas who are engaged in spiritual endeavour (*Atmabhyas*) but have not yet attained stability, leave their bodies easily, without pain or suffering, and after enjoying the pleasures of the heaven they return to earth where they are again engaged in *Atmabhyas* and thus they attain *Atmatattva*. The gyanis, however, have a very comfortable death; their prana merge into akash there itself and they attain to the state of *videhamukta*”

Question: “What is it that the fakirs call as ‘to be dead while being still alive’?”

Master: “Death is of two kinds. First, to leave the physical body; it applies to everybody. Second, to die while one is alive; it envisages renunciation of ego and desire, and it occurs in the case of fakirs and lovers. In the latter case there is no ideation of ‘I’ and ‘you’ and the jiva becomes *Atmaswaroop*. His *vasanas* are annihilated while he is still alive, and he does not come in the cycle of rebirths.

“According to Sufis, the two kinds of death are: a black death and a white death. To leave the body is called a black death. To live like a dead person, which envisages annihilation of ego or *vasana*, is called a white death.

“The letters in the word ‘death’ suggest: (d) drop the feelings of (e) ego and of (th) ‘thou’—the distinction of ‘I’ and ‘you’—and thus you will attain (A) Allah or the Almighty. Death envisages return to the primordial state—the *Atmic* state. Fakirs forget their gross bodies while they are alive. By abandoning their desires and hopes, they die before their death and attain to the *Atmic* state. Desirelessness connotes death while one is still alive. Fakirs desire nothing but the beloved. To them, death means union with the beloved, which they attain while they are alive. Therefore, they attempt *fanai*—annihilation of the self. It has been said in *Guru Granth Sahib*:

*Shabd marah, phir jivai sadahi,
Tan phir maran na hoi.*

The seekers who have lost themselves in the *shabd* (*gurushabd*) or who have attained absorption in the precept and *gurushabd* attain such a life or supreme state that they attain immortality; they do not die again. They annihilate

themselves while they are alive. Fakir Bedil has said:

Only that lover comes on this path,
Who has given up his head and feet.
He only attains the supreme state,
Who surrenders his two worlds.
Learning and intellect are of no avail,
Nor are religion and agnostism,
When the flames of love
Burst into a powerful blaze.
It is easy to be a Shia or a Sunni,
But not easy to be a Sufi¹
Having lost the self,
One has to mount the gallows.
Love instantly settles
All issues of religion.
Transcending religion and attaining ecstasy,
The Sufi claims *Ana-al-Haq*.
On attaining oneness, O Bedil,
He who loses the illusion of ego,
To him the Lord reveals Himself
Certainly at all places.”

1 one who has lost the ego; pure

Question: “Sir, does a gyani, too, take a rebirth?”

Master: “A gyani does not take a rebirth as a result of the past actions, he is born of his own will or due to a divine command. For a gyani, there is neither a birth nor a death. Death and rebirth are the result of ideations (*sankalpa*), desire (*vasana*), actions (*karma*) and ego. The question of rebirth does not arise in the case of those who have conquered *sankalpa*, who are relieved of *vasana* and are free from karma and ego. Those who have abandoned the self while being alive, go beyond the gross state and merge the self in Atma. They attain the Self, but they take rebirth by their own will for the good of others. A gyani is beyond the bounds of birth and death.”

Question: “Sir, what is the distinction between the functioning of a *gyani* and

that of an *agyani*?”

Master: “The bodily functioning or overt behaviour of the both—*gyanis* and *agyanis*—is alike. There is, however, a difference in their spirit or attitude. A *gyani* understands that the universe is illusory and, therefore, he functions without likes and dislikes, but an *agyani* is bound with actions. He who has the latent tendency (*vasana*) for actions, lives in bondage. Thus, a *gyani* and an *agyani* differ from each other only in terms of *vasana*. As long as there is the body, joy and sorrow are also there. But a *gyani* understands that these are the effects of his past karma and he bears them with fortitude and contentment, whereas an *agyani* is always agitated and restless. A *gyani* may be seen functioning overtly but he is in the state of equanimity within. But an *agyani*, even though he might be quiet overtly or appears to have renounced actions, is still in bondage within. A jiva must purify his mind (*antahkaran*) by good actions and must always remain engaged in *Nam* and enjoy Atmananda within.”

Question: “Sir, how does a *brahmgyani* conduct himself while he lives in the world?”

Master: “A *brahmgyani* is friendly to all and he is very kind. Though unattached, he has the attitude of love for all. In his mind, he is not attached to anybody. He is not unhappy in suffering, nor is he happy in comforts; he is even-minded in joy and sorrow and treats them alike. Though he is free from desires, yet he carries on all his mundane functions. He is free from actions (*akarmi*) even while he is engaged in actions. He accepts what comes to him according to destiny (*prarabdha*). He carries on his functions according to the injunctions of the scriptures but his mind is fixed on Atma. Though engaged overtly in actions, he cognises everything as illusory and an aspect of Brahm (Brahmswaroop). He has no interest either in the past or in the future, and being alert in the present he is established in Atma. He is dead while he is alive; in other words, he bears no desire or ideation. He is ever desireless. Such a jiva is called a fakir. The connotation of the word FAKIR is indicated by its letters.

Firm Faith and realisation that ‘I am Atma’. He is unshaken in his faith.

F: Whatever happens is credited to oneself, or is considered to be one’s own ideation (*sankalpa*). Therefore, he is even-minded and unaffected by joy and sorrow; he does not distinguish between the two.

A: Avoidance of waste of breath, or austerity in the use of the breath; not to use even a single breath without *Nam*. A fakir is very particular about the

use of his breath. He believes that a breath away from God is wasteful.

(or C): Contentment with the will of God. A fakir is always content with the will of God. It implies that having abandoned the ego, he fully surrenders himself to the Lord.

I: Introvision. The mind of a fakir is always directed within, toward the Self, Atma. He has abandoned extrovision.

R: Remembrance of God. A fakir is ever busy remembering God.
(addressing a devotee) Please sing that song about fakirs.”

Devotee: He alone enjoys the pleasures of *fakiri*,
Who is independent, and without evil.
He breaks the bonds of the world,
And is not bound by religion.
He lives without anger, abjures all ties,
He is not bound to the world;
Above all attractions,
He is independent, free, unattached.
He sacrifices mind, body and wealth;
Unattached to self, body and wealth,
He accumulates nothing, remains desireless.
He seeks no company and favours;
Contented with what he gets,
He worries about nothing, seeks nothing.
Free from impurities of all manner,
Maintaining firm faith in God alone,
He avoids publicity and show.
He remains desireless and independent,
Humble and simple,
Free from conceit and show.
His mind is free from duality,
From care, anxiety and deceit.
Eliminating all doubts and illusions,
He is ever vigilant and humble.

He is free from ego,
Attractions, pride and vanity.
Being always unattached,
He seeks solitude and absorption,
And mounting the gallows,
He realises *Ana-al-Haq*.
He is fearless and frightens none,
And ever remains free from ego, O! Gobind¹.

¹ name of the poet

Question: “Sir, it is observed that in the age of *Kaliyuga* many so-called saints and sadhus in ochre clothes proclaim themselves as God. Everyone has a distinct faith. How to identify a true saint or a gyani? What kind of saints should one see and seek company of?”

Master: “One must seek company of only such a *satshastra* (scripture) and a saint who say nothing but about Atma and who grant bliss. Association with such a saint and a *satshastra* must not be abandoned; one must serve them intently. The *satshastras* that grant bliss must be studied again and again, because only such an association helps one cross the ocean of the universe. They alone can be called saints and *satshastras* whose association and study promote disinclination towards the universe, who help in the development of non-attachment, and with whose help a jiva withdraws his thoughts from everything and directs them only towards Atma.

“Only a gyani and none else, can know or recognise a true saint who has attained Atma. Nevertheless, such saints have attributes by which a jiva can, after associating himself with them, identify them. These attributes include stability in Atma, equanimity in joy and sorrow, introvision and tranquility. They maintain even-cognition and are in tranquility. Their minds are directed inwards and they wish good of everybody. Anyone who comes in their company, attains peace.

“Occult powers are attained through penance (*japa and tapa*) by a gyani as well as an agyani. These powers are the result of penance (*japa and tapa*), and not of gyan. Those who use occult powers, fail to attain Atmagyan and

their spiritual progress stops with that; but they are pleased with these powers and wear ochre clothes. Displaying their powers, they proclaim themselves as God; but they do not attain salvation. Realisation of Atma is the supreme attainment (*siddhi*). Those who have attained Atma, are not interested in occult powers. To a gyani, everything except Atma is illusory. Remaining always away from the material objects, the gyanis are established in the Atmic state. Association with true saints brings peace and tranquility, whereas association with agyanis or with the so-called saints in saintly guise, brings disquiet and restlessness. In other words, association with such saints promotes tendencies for material objects and these tendencies (*vasana*) become a veil on Atma.”

Question: “Sir, who is a *gurumukh* and who is a *manomukh*?”

Master: “He who endeavours in the direction of Atma by obeying the instructions of his satguru, is said to be a *gurumukh*. He who is guided by his mind is a *manomukh*, and he undergoes suffering.”

Question: “Sir, what attributes must a seeker have to attain Atma?”

Master: “Only such attributes as facilitate the realisation of Atma are beneficial to a seeker. The seeker must bear in mind the instructions of saints and *satshastras*, and cast his living accordingly. He who argues merely for the sake of information, is a fool. He who listens to the words of saints and *satshastras* for the attainment of gyan, and reflects over them continually and practises accordingly, attains to the Atmic state. Until a jiva attains quiescence, he must reflect over the words of the satguru and be engaged in uninterrupted practice.”

Question: “Sir, who is a *sanyasi*?”

Master: “He who remains above love and hate, and maintains even-cognition, is a *sanyasi*. A jiva becomes a true sanyasi when he fully realises the Truth, that is, when he becomes a gyani. By abandoning *asat* (the unreal), he realises *Sat* (the Real).”

Question: “Sir, what is yoga and who is a true yogi?”

Master: “To check the mind against the arousal of ideations (*sankalpas*) and to merge it in Atma, is called yoga. To withdraw the thought from everywhere and fix it in the Beloved, is called yoga. When the thought process is stabilised and the mind is established in Atma, one gets peace and bliss and becomes oblivious of the senses. It is only when the mind is brought under control that one attains success in yoga and gets bliss.

“He who is ever absorbed in Atma and practises the precept that nothing

but Atma exists, is a yogi. A yogi firmly believes, 'I am a non-entity and there is nothing but Atma'. His concentration is ever on Atma. He understands that Atma is distinct from all actions and is not bound by any action. Therefore, in spite of his participation in various actions, a yogi considers himself distinct from everything and not bound with anything and is ever absorbed in Atma. Even though he is engaged in actions, he is beyond all actions."

Question: "Sir, what happens to one who has obtained the *shabd* from the satguru but has not realised Atma and leaves the body while being still engaged in practice?"

Master: "The jiva who, after obtaining the *shabd* from the satguru, engages himself in practice according to the precept but leaves the body without attaining the goal does not face destruction in both the worlds. Assuming a rebirth, he continues his practice from where he had left it in his previous birth. By the grace of God, such a jiva gets a rebirth either in the house of a yogi or of a wealthy person so that he continues his practice without hindrance. Continuing his practice over several births, the seeker eventually attains the goal. By the force of his practice in the previous births, he progresses further in his next birth and eventually attains the goal, or in other words, he realises Atmagyan."

Question: "Sir, what is *surt sadhana*?"

Master: "*Trikuti dhyana* is called *surt sadhana*. It is a kind of practice in which a seeker fixes his gaze on a spot between the two eyebrows and engages himself in pranayama. Living according to the instructions of the satguru, he withdraws his thoughts from the material objects, controls his mind and fixes his gaze on the *trikuti* and practises pranayama. With this practice, he enjoys a kind of bliss and his mind attains tranquillity. Thereafter, he attains Atmagyan, This is *surt sadhana*; the jiva attains the natural state (*sahaj awastha*) after that."

Question: "Sir, we see the numerous forms and objects in the universe. How can it be said that the universe is Brahmswaroop, an aspect of Brahm?"

Master: "When a jiva comes to satsang and gets the precept from an enlightened person and accordingly engages himself in practice, then with the grace of the satguru he develops even-cognition and sees Atma or Allah in everything. Practice always triumphs. As is the practice undertaken by a jiva, so are the objects experienced by him. He who is engaged in spiritual endeavour (Atmabhyas) realises Atma in everything, but he who practises

materialism experiences the diverse objects. It is only when a jiva practices for the Atmic state that he realises that there exists nothing but Atma. It is not a matter only to talk about, it is a matter for action.”

Question: “Sir, since Atma is omnipresent and permeates everything, and nothing exists but Atma, why does a jiva wander by assuming the feelings of ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘mine’ and ‘yours’?”

Master: “A jiva keeps wandering only as long as he forgets Atma. When after a prolonged practice he experiences that nothing exists but Atma, his illusion of ‘I’ and ‘you’ vanishes.”

Question: “Sir, how is Atma realised?”

Master: “Desire is the veil between jiva and Atma, and when this veil is lifted, Atma is realised. The veil is lifted when the jiva practises *gurushabd* with concentration according to the instructions of the satguru and cultivates dispassion (*vairagya*) within and lives accordingly. This state is attained by the jiva after intense endeavour. He must first abandon the desires (*vasana*) of the world (*sansara*) and annihilate his mind. He must withdraw his thoughts from the gross objects and take the path of subtlety. He must wholeheartedly practise according to the instructions of the satguru. When he develops zeal for practice and dispassion, he can then hope for union with the Beloved.”

No more questions were asked by the devotees. There was silence for some time. It was 6 a.m. and the sun was rising above the horizon and the early morning session ended.

The programme for the remaining part of the day which was the concluding day of the anniversary celebration, included devotional singing. Prayer (*dua*) was offered in the evening. The concluding hymns were recited in chorus and that marked the end of the anniversary celebration. *Prasad* was distributed. The devotees who had come from Bombay left by the evening trains. The devotees from outstations stayed for a couple of days and had a blissful time talking and discussing spiritual matters with the Master. This time the celebrations were highly exhilarating.

ADIEU

(Alvida)

SHANTI NAGAR AND BOMBAY *December, 1957*

The devotees were so much enchanted by the exhilarating company and the sweet talks of the Master that none among them could even imagine that the beloved would withdraw from the scene so soon while the show was in full swing. There were elderly devotees who had been on the spiritual path and yet none among them could feel that the beloved would suddenly pack up and depart. Even those who had been with him all the time could not sense the swift approach of the events. No one had anticipated that the Master who had maintained good health and was in a cheerful and blissful state, would suddenly have a set back in his health and would slip away without a forewarning. It is very difficult to narrate the parting scenes (*alvida*); one is helpless.

The Master visited Delhi, Ajmer, Udaipur, Baroda in the months of August and September 1957. This happened to be the final round of his visits to his devotees. He did throw some indirect hints but these were so implicit that the devotees could understand the true purport only after the Master had left the mortal frame.

On 29 October, 1957, the Master had a mild attack of jaundice. Generally, an ordinary disease like jaundice is easily treated with drugs, rest and diet restrictions. He followed all these, but none would show any effect. He, who had treated thousands of patients of jaundice and of more deadly diseases, was himself suffering from this ailment, and nothing seemed to work. His son, Dr Hari, who had been called from Adipur, sought his permission to try his treatment on him, but the Master said to him, "Let us leave it to God." He also created such a situation that Dr Hari had to go to Delhi to treat a patient there. In the meantime, his condition worsened. He also developed itch which made him very uncomfortable. All relatives, friends and devotees became anxious. Doctors from Kalyan were called, but they could not bring about any improvement in his condition.

It was then thought that he should be shifted to Bombay for treatment by an expert hakeem.¹ It was felt that in such diseases treatment according to the Unani system was more efficacious than that under other systems of medicine. When this suggestion was placed before him, he said, “The drugs work only when it is the will of the Lord.” Obviously, he was not interested in any more treatment and did not like to leave Shanti Nagar. But under the persistent pressure of the devotees and the relatives, he agreed.

1 a physician who practises the Unani system of therapy

When the devotees in Kalyan came to know that the Master was about to leave for Bombay for further treatment, they gathered at his place in large numbers. They were seated around the Master. Seeing their gloomy and anxious faces, the Master said, “Some days ago my son Hari had a dream. He saw a multistoreyed building. Going up, he entered a hall. There were wooden shelves on the walls. On each shelf there was a basket containing the ashes of a human body. On each basket there was a skull. Though the baskets contained ashes of human beings, the skulls were of animals—of dogs, pigs, jackals and wolves—except only in four cases where there were human skulls. Can anyone among you explain the meaning of this dream?”

Everybody around him remained silent. The Master looked at their faces, but no one uttered a word. Then in a very solemn tone he said, “The dream explains the internal state of the *sangat*. The *sangat* has not yet learnt to live as human beings.” These words, he said with deep anguish. Then in a still more piercing tone he said, “The time has come; death is knocking at the door. Put some efforts and become human beings. Or, do you still wish to continue to live as animals? Is this precious birth to be wasted in living like animals? You come to satsang and spend an hour there and then you assume that by doing that you have obliged God or done Him a favour. Do you ever try to abide by what you hear in satsang? You bow before Guru Granth Sahib, but do you care to abide by what has been said by Guruji? You have not yet learnt to be of some use to a neighbour in the hour of need. When someone arranges *Path Sahib* in an event of a bereavement, do you ever think of going there to read and help in the completion of the *Path Sahib*? What is attained by merely bowing to Guru Granth Sahib? Does anyone care to abide by the words of Guru Granth Sahib?” His tone was grave and there was force

in what he said. After a pause he said, “How long shall one depend on one’s breath?

Death hovers over you all the time,
Aiming at you as a target.
The current in the stream is swift,
There is roaring whirlpool on the way.
How do you remain at rest, you rower,
When such dangers are ahead of you?

“The *sangat* is still sleeping like animals. Does life mean merely eating, drinking and being merry? Those who are married, have great responsibilities. The Gurus have ordained that one must spend one-tenth of one’s income in charity. Have you ever thought of that? When a jiva does not get anything he blames and speaks ill of God. But does he care for his duties? It is obligatory for everyone to spend a part of his income for a good cause. Give, and you will be given. If you think that you cannot give one-tenth of your income, fix any other proportion to be spent for a good cause. If you cannot do that, give a meal a day to a *mast*¹ fellow. Or, give some food to a poor person. It is a great thing to give in the name of God. It is a pity that the *sangat* has not yet learnt to do anything. Everybody assumes that these associations are everlasting. But God is powerful and independent. How long will the *sangat* remain indifferent and lazy?

¹ a mad man; one who is always in ecstasy

Do away with ignorance, indifference,
How long will you sleep and be lazy?
Those who acted silently have progressed,
And have attained the goal.
Do away with your sleep,
Or, you will be carried into a drain,
That does not reach the ocean.”

The manner in which the Master spoke, sent a wave of shock through everyone. Never before had he said such words and spoken in such a firm and

remorseful tone. His face looked grave. All the devotees sat quietly around him. Then the Master went into the residential barrack. The local visitors also left. No one uttered a word, as if the words of the Master continued to resound in their ears.

It was 3:30 p.m. When the devotees went to the backyard of the residential barrack for tea, they saw the Master sitting quietly on a cot, with his head bent and resting on the cup of his palms and the elbows resting on the knees. His eyes were closed. Someone quietly brought mats and spread them in front of the Master. The devotees sat on the mats. By 4:30 p.m. devotees had gathered in large numbers because the news had spread that the Master would leave for Bombay in the evening. Disturbed by the movement of the devotees, the Master lifted his head after some time. His face reflected sadness. Pointing to his shirt, he said, “Look, it bears the initials RSM¹ inscribed on it. What does this convey? It is a prayer to the Beloved saying,

1 Initial letters of his name, Rochaldas Sujan Singh Mansharamani

Reconciled be with me,
Separation being unbearable,
My mind being mad for you.

“The Lord says:

Renounce your ego,
Surrender yourself,
*Moksha*² will be granted to you.

2 Liberation

“We pray to the Beloved that He may not (R) recede from us but (R) reconcile Himself with us. The Beloved says, ‘Yes. But you must (R) remember the Beloved and your primeval promise, and must (S) sacrifice your desires, and must not be entangled in (M) *maya*. The world is ephemeral. Why are you in love with what is transient?

“I would only stress: Remember God, do not waste time, the time is fast passing.

As one stretches one's body
And remains in rest,
The Beloved leaves one instantly.”

The Master had spoken this much when the car that was to take him to Bombay arrived. The Master got up and said that his luggage might be put in the car.

Holding the walking-stick in his hand, he said to the devotees in a casual tone, “May God now take care of you!” Everybody felt sad. On no other occasion had he said good-bye to the devotees in such a sad and casual manner. His usual way of saying good-bye used to be “May God bless you,” said with a smile. He would allow the devotees to bow before him and would pat them. But his utterances today cast a gloom. Having said good-bye he got into the car, lay himself on the rear seat and covered his face with a linen sheet. Two devotees who were to escort him to Bombay, sat on the front seat. All other devotees were watching like helpless spectators, stunned at what was happening. When the car started, the sound of the engine startled them and some of them started running after the car. Someone shouted to the two devotees in the car, “See that you bring him back ceremonially with the beat of the drums.”¹ It was said in deep anguish and this brought tears to the eyes of many disciples. But, alas! nobody could then realise that there was a sad pun on these words and that the Master had made them speak the truth indirectly. Nobody realised that this could also imply that the body would return in a procession with (devotional) singing and the beat of drums. Indirectly, the Master had made the gestures of a farewell, but the devotees, being in deep attachment with him, did not understand them correctly.

¹ a local idiom implying success and joy

It was dark when the car reached Mohammed Ali Road in Bombay, where a famous hakeem lived. The hakeem had met the Master earlier also, and had profound affection and regard for him. The car halted at his residence. A devotee went in to check if the hakeem was in. The hakeem was excited as he

learnt that the Master was in the car outside his house. He came out quickly and said, "The Lord has listened to my prayer and a divine person has come to the dwelling of this humble being." The Master removed the sheet of linen from his head and sat on the seat. Pulling him out gently by the arm, the hakeem requested the Master to come into the house and grace the place. The Master, who could not disregard a gesture of love, readily agreed and went into the house. The hakeem examined the Master and gave some medicines for him with instructions how to use them. When the hakeem was offered a fee by a devotee, he said, "Rarely does one get an opportunity to serve a divine person like him and his recovery is the most suitable reward for me. Kindly let me know about his progress. Should it be necessary, I shall personally come over to attend to him." The Master, however, had maintained an air of indifference throughout this period, as if he was not concerned with what was happening around him. On returning to the car he quietly lay down on the rear seat and covered himself with the linen sheet. Soon the car arrived at the residence of a close relative of the Master at Marine Drive, where arrangements had been made for the stay of the Master.

As the devotees in Bombay came to know of the arrival of the Master at Marine Drive, they gathered there in large numbers. In about two or three days, the Master had some relief. The devotees met him as usual and discussed with him their problems—material and spiritual—and he listened to them carefully and tried to guide them as usual.

After four days, his condition again became bad. Treatment of three well-known allopathic physicians was started, but this did not help. The help of a Parsee gentleman who was known for his magic treatment was sought. His treatment gave the Master some relief, but only for one day, and his condition again worsened the next day. A famous astrologer who had come from Baroda checked the positioning of the planets and said the Master was under very adverse influence of Mars which would last up to 3 December, 1957. He offered to perform a *pooja* to ward off the adverse planetary influence. Sitting in a corner in the house, he performed the *pooja* meticulously and with extreme care. The 3rd of December (Tuesday) arrived. Everyone was engaged in praying that this day should pass off without anything adverse happening. There was some aggravation in his illness but somehow the day passed off and the next morning everybody heaved a sigh of relief that the worst was over, and hoped for a quick recovery of the Master.

But after two days the condition of the Master worsened further. Some

devotees contacted the spirits. The spirits advised them to abide by the will of the Lord. They refused to reply either positively or negatively.

So far the Master had been watching all the happenings with an attitude of indifference. Seeing everybody around him in despair and anxiety, he said, "Leave the things to the Lord and watch what pleases Him. Stop medicines."

A devotee brought with him a famous hakeem. At that time the Master was resting. A linen sheet was spread over him and his face was covered. The hakeem and the disciples called to him gently a few times but there was no response. Considering it inadvisable to disturb the patient in his rest, the hakeem left. When the Master woke up and asked for water, he was told about the hakeem. He said, "What can one do against the will of the Lord?"

As devotees in the other towns came to know of the illness of the Master, many of them came over to Bombay. Dr Hari was recalled from Delhi by a trunk call, without consulting the Master.

On December 7 or 8, when all the devotees were in an adjoining hall for lunch, and Dr Hari was alone in attendance before the Master, the Master spoke to him in confidence. He said to him, "Hari, I want to withdraw my thoughts from everyone. Do not allow anyone to stand before me." With this, Dr Hari became very alert and watchful and he did not allow anyone to stand before the Master. If by chance a devotee happened to come before the Master as Dr Hari was looking, in some other direction, the Master, with his eyes closed called, "Hari, see who is standing there." Dr Hari then instantly asked the devotee to leave immediately or stand in a corner behind the Master. The Master had drawn his thoughts within to such an extent that if a very close relative of his came and stood before him, he looked at him in a manner as if an unknown person was standing before him. Seeing all this, the devotees became very sad; they sobbed and wept.

Seeing the pitiable condition of the devotees, Dr Hari requested the Master, "Sir, why not pray to the Lord for recovery?" The Master said, "Not at all. The Lord is supreme. We must submit to His will."

This aggravated the despair among the devotees. Presently, a devotee brought a bottle containing water which had been charmed by a sadhu closely known to the Master. It was said that the water charmed by the sadhu never failed to give good results. Towards his end, the Master took nothing but water. He had forgotten the names of almost all the devotees. He, however, remembered Hari and frequently said, "Hari, give me water." When the Master again asked for water, Dr Hari lifted the bottle containing the charmed

water. Instantly, the Master, with his eyes still closed, shouted, “No, not that Hari; give me water from the other glass.” Dr Hari could understand the intention of the Master who was omniscient. He gave ordinary water to the Master. This further enhanced the despair among the devotees. All eyes were fixed on the Master. Everyone was engaged in prayer for his recovery.

The devotees attended to the Master by turns. On the 10th December (Tuesday) since 2:30 in the morning Dr Hari had been attending to him. At about four, the Master asked for water in a feeble voice. As Dr Hari gave him some water, the Master had a hiccup and the water partly came out of his mouth. Dr Hari wiped it with a towel. The Master again asked for water after a short while, and this time, too, he had a hiccup and the water could not go beyond his throat. Seeing that the end was fast approaching, Dr Hari examined his body and found that it was very cold. He gave him a massage, but the body did not show any signs of warming up. Soon the Master took a deep breath, uttered ‘Hari Om’ in a very feeble voice, and his head dropped on one side of the pillow. A small piece of a black substance fell out of his mouth. That appeared to be the end. Dr Hari checked his breath but there was no sign of breathing. He covered the body with a linen sheet. Holding himself firmly, he knelt before the Master. It was 4:35 a.m. Tuesday the 10th of December, 1957. At Shantinagar, *dhamal* of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz is played from 4 to 4:30 in the morning. The Master chose this time for his departure. During his life-time, he always valued this part of the day most, and called it the most fortunate. He always advised the devotees to keep awake and practise at that time. The Master used to say, “Even the birds start chirping before sunrise. How do you call yourself human beings if you do not get up before the sunrise? Only beasts get up after sunrise.”

Maintaining a calm poise, Dr Hari came out of the room and broke the sad news to the devotees. Instantly, all started moaning and crying, as if the shelter under which they had enjoyed bliss for long had suddenly crashed with lightening. Everyone found himself without a shelter. Some hours passed. Everybody was experiencing darkness around him. The lamp that had given them light for so long was suddenly put off.

According to the Indian Calendar, it was the third day of the dark side of the moon in the month of *Margashirsa* 2014 *Vikrami Samvat*. Lord Krishna has said in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, ‘Among the months, I am *Margashirsa*.’ According to the Hindu scriptures, this is supposed to be a very holy month. The Master attained *mahasamadhi* in this month.

The reading of scriptures was started in the room where the body was placed. Incense was kept burning. The body was rubbed with butter oil (*ghee*). At 1 p.m. it was taken from Bombay to Shanti Nagar reaching there by 3:30 p.m. It was carried on a stretcher to the hall. The hall was packed with devotees. They clung to the stretcher and cried and wailed. He was so dear to everyone; everyone felt that he or she had lost the most dear one. His face still looked fresh and radiant. Some devotees entertained a false hope and said, "Perhaps he may rise again. We have heard of saints who resurrected. Some saints have risen from the pyre at the cremation ground. Why can't that miracle happen here?" Some others thought that he who had totally surrendered himself to the Lord and had not used occult powers during his life-time, would not seek such methods after death. They thought that he who had practised humility all his life would not assert himself after his death.

The reading from the scriptures and devotional singing continued. At 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the 11th of December, five devotees gave the ritual bath to the body. These devotees heard the sound of 'Hari Om' coming from the body. The body was then placed on a decorated bier. Devotees in large number placed garlands, coconuts and scarves on the bier. Many devotees sprinkled rose-water and perfumes on the body. Some knelt before the body and some kissed it and some said farewell with tears and cries. At 3:30 p.m., the bier was lifted by the pall bearers; it was carried in a large procession, accompanied by music and devotional singing all the way. Before the procession reached the cremation ground, a big crowd had already gathered there. The body was placed on a pyre of sandalwood and at 5:30 in the evening when the sun was setting it was consigned to the flames. The horizon in the west lit up crimson. As the sun disappeared in the sky, this sun, too, who had bestowed light upon us for so many years went up with the flames and disappeared.

All the devotees were stunned. Everybody found darkness around him. No one could think of what the future held for him and who would guide and help him henceforth. Everybody was moaning and sobbing. Who would console whom? The path appeared to be barren ahead. Many a devotee wished that God might have granted his life to the Master. But how could that be?

There was continuous devotional singing for three days at the cremation ground and also at his place in Shanti Nagar. The ashes were collected with

appropriate rites on the third day. The remains were collected in silver and copper vessels. A part of the remains was consigned to the rivers at various holy places and a part was retained by the family and put at a simple *samadhi* erected in the hall where he had spent most of his time.

The rites of the third day were performed according to the custom. These were followed by the rites on the twelfth day. After the last rites were over on the twelfth day, Dr Hart, the Master's eldest son, was consecrated to the spiritual seat. *Dastarband* ceremony was performed with great solemnity. A turban of ochre cloth was tied around his head¹.

1 A brief Life Sketch of Dr R.M. Hari is given at [Appendix I](#).

I visited Shanti Nagar again two days after the ceremony. A devotee sang the following song in the satsang in the afternoon.

What the beloved did while parting,
That killed me,
And bound me firmly in love.
With the nights I spent with him,
And with the sweet talks I had with him,
I am all in ecstasy.
When shall he come to me again,
I am awaiting those moments.
How shall I get him again?
Sadiq² is killed by his looks,
And these are the ways of love.

2 name of the poet

There was a large gathering in the satsang. But something was missing—that force that attracted and held everybody. Everything was there as it used to be—the musical instruments, the chair, the walking stick, the audience—but the one who graced all these was missing. Everyone looked sad.

After the satsang the devotees exchanged their experiences and thoughts. A

devotee, who was a physician, said, “When I visited the Master in Bombay to enquire after his health, he said to me, ‘Do you think I am ill? You people have unnecessarily created a scare. Why should one give that importance to the body? One’s duty is to concentrate on the Primordial and realise that.’ As the Master was speaking, I saw him changing into a healthy form, his face radiating with divine glow. I rubbed my eyes to be sure of what I was seeing. As I thought of calling the devotees outside to come in and see that the Master was all right, I heard the sound of coughing. As I looked again at the Master, he was in that sickly state. I was sitting on a chair opposite him. He was smiling at me; there was a mystic touch in the way he looked at me. I was reminded of the couplet,

How can they be unwell,
Who are merged in the Divine.

Can the waves engulf the ocean? I thought of his divine mystery and bowed to him. I then took leave of him, wishing him a quick recovery.”

Another devotee from Kalyan said, “In the early hours of the 10th of December (Tuesday), while I was busy in my practice and had concentrated on the image of the Master, I saw the prana forcefully bursting out of the Master’s head. I was greatly disturbed by this vision and prayed to the Lord for his well-being. Thereafter, my mind got disturbed very much. The time passed with great difficulty. Then in the morning I came to this place as usual and got the sad news.”

A lady devotee from Baroda said, “On the morning of the 10th December, as I received the trunk call from Bombay giving me the sad news, I was so overwhelmed with grief that I fell down on the cot. As I was weeping, I heard the sound of ‘Hari Om.’ I looked up and found the Master standing before me. It was the same graceful radiating face. I forgot the telephonic message. As I was looking at him, he said to me, ‘I am taking leave of you.’ And then the trunk call message flashed before me. As I thought of holding him by his hand, my thoughts broke up and I found myself lying on the cot, weeping and sobbing.”

A woman who lived in a house across the cremation ground said, “In the night, after the cremation, when I peeped through the window in the direction of the fire, I was amazed to witness a strange spectacle. I saw a large number of angels, dressed in white descending from above on the spot where the pyre

was lit. They circumambulated the burning pyre, showered big white flowers at it and then rose in the sky. Among them there was a big angel riding a horse; he was followed by other angels. In this manner the angels continued to descend, circumambulate the pyre and rise in the sky. This process continued throughout the night till the dawn. I watched the scene the whole night but did not feel tired. In the morning, I wondered how the angels and gods had descended from above to pay homage to the Master. Shah Abdul Latif has said:

Those who remember God the whole night,
Their dust, O! Latif, is venerated,
And millions come to bow before it.”

Another lady devotee said, “While I was engaged in meditation round about the time the Master left his mortal frame, I saw in a vision that the Master was sealed in a glass bottle. Suddenly there was a loud bang and the bottle burst. Brilliant sparkles of light were seen emanating in abundance from the broken bottle. I could see his image in every piece of glass. Then I could hear him speaking to me. He said, ‘See, I am now free. Don’t you see me everywhere, in all the directions?’ As I opened my eyes and looked around, I saw myself surrounded by darkness. After the sunrise, I got the sad news. As a saint has said:

The yogis lost the finite,
And merged in the Infinite.”

Another lady devotee who was an old associate of the Master sang the following song:

I see your play and glamour,
In all directions around me.
At times you recede,
At times you reconcile.
At times you beseech and entreat,
At times you are indifferent.
At times you manifest as Rochal,
Revealing the mysteries,
And gracing by your look.

At times I see in you,
The incarnation of love.
At times you are the preceptor,
Revealing the divinity of love.
At times you shine as sun,
Granting us light.
At times I see Qutab,¹
Manifested in you.
At times I see in you,
Janaka who was *videhamukta*.
At times I see you proclaim,
Mast Qalandar, Mast Qalandar.
At times I see the glamour of Nanak,
Who attained to the Formless.
At times I see Lord Ganesha,
Meditating on *Om* and *Soham*.
At times I see Christ,
Mounting the Cross.
At times I see Rama,
With a bow and arrows.
At times I see Krishna,
Dancing with the friends.
At times I see Mohammed,
Leading armies on the field.
At times you are blessing disciples,
At times you see One in everything.
I see you in incarnations,
I see your play and glamour.

¹ Sai Qutab Ali Shah, the satguru of the Master

Epilogue

Three paths—karma marg (path of action), bhakti marg (path of love and devotion), and gyan marg (path of knowledge)—are mainly discussed in this book. Spiritual endeavour undertaken sequentially is commendable. But in certain cases of seekers the satgurus do not maintain this sequence. It is the duty of a seeker to have absolute faith in the words of his satguru and act as he is advised by him. A seeker stands to gain only if he believes that what his satguru has suggested to him is the correct prescription for him. One must not be bogged down in intellect. If one maintains one's march (endeavour) with love and devotion, one is sure to attain the goal.

The Sufi saints have endeavoured and struggled. They have not cared whether the precepts granted to them pertained to karma marg, bhakti marg, or gyan marg. The path of a Sufi is very simple. He does not understand anything except love.

If we have a close look at the Sufistic approach, we find that the *saguni* or *majazi* practices of the Sufis also cover the elements of *nirguni* bhakti or gyan.

According to Vedanta, the sequence is karma marg, bhakti marg and gyan marg. These three paths are closely related to the main three aspects of the human body, viz body, mind and intellect. None of the actions of a seeker can materialise without the integration of these three aspects. As a seeker advances in the realm of subtlety by the endeavours of body, mind and intellect, he approaches the Primordial State. The incarnations, prophets and sages in all religions have recommended these methods under different names and helped their disciples to pursue the various practices. The essential requirement is that the seeker must have full faith in the precept granted by his satguru, and endeavour accordingly. All paths and faiths teach the same thing.

Appendix I

DR R.M. HARI

A Brief Life Sketch

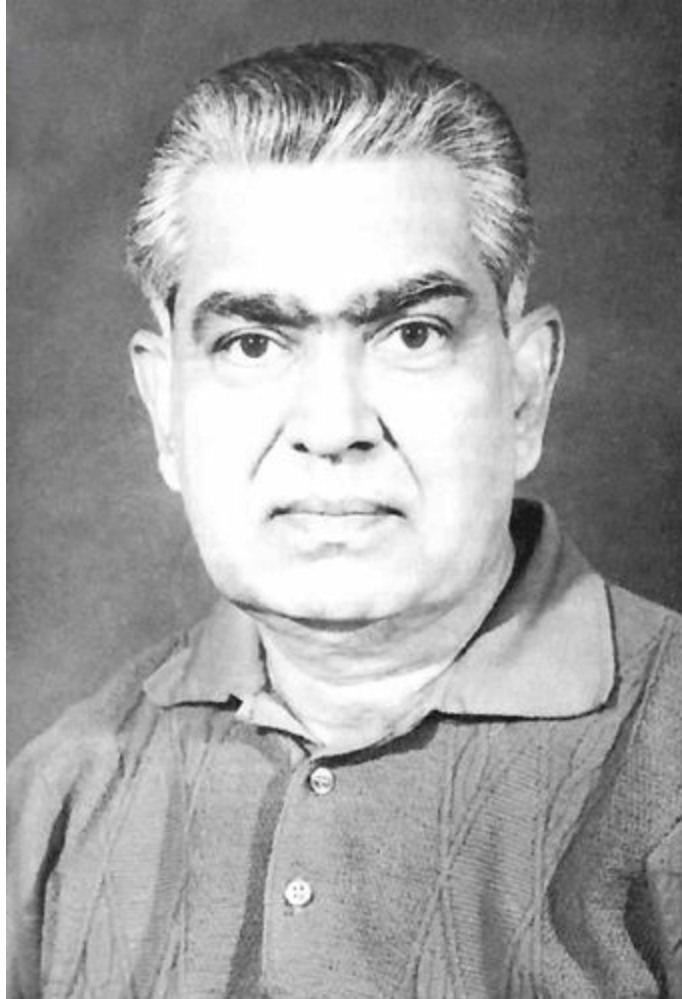
Dr R.M. Hari was born at Rohri, Sind, Pakistan on 30 April, 1912. His father Sri (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib was a saint of a very high realisation. The atmosphere at home was pious and holy. Sadhus and fakirs were frequent visitors at home and they were always treated and served with respect. Dr Hari, therefore, had the privilege of being in holy environments since his birth.

He had his schooling at Municipal High School, Rohri. He then passed the examinations in Homoeopathy and became a qualified homoeopath physician. Following in the footsteps of his father and preceptor, Sri (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib, Dr Hari also decided to do free charitable homoeopathic service. He never invited donations or subscriptions for his living or the dispensary. He fully surrendered himself to the Lord, and the Lord took care of him throughout his life. He always helped the needy.

Out of love and respect, he was also addressed as Dada Sai.

The life of Dada Sai is a unique example. His basic approach was 'evolution, progress and enlightenment within and secrecy and anonymity outside'. He always concealed himself and avoided display and ostentation. He would not hesitate in inviting criticism to safeguard spiritual secrecy and anonymity. He never sat down as a head of a congregation to deliver a sermon.

At times Dada Sai chose to live in an aristocratic manner and had the experience of everything in the world. He had a very fine taste and liked everything in a gracious and exquisite manner. He visited many countries in the world. Those who saw him were astonished. On the other hand he also lived such a simple and austere life totally devoid of material comforts and in great anonymity that those around him were dumbfounded. For him all states were alike, he was even-minded in all conditions. For him, joy and sorrow, and acceptance and rejection, were all alike. He never approached anybody for help, and yet he was always helpful and generous to others. He was humble and free from ego. He never spoke ill of anybody.



DR R. M. Hari
(30 April, 1912—21 March, 1980)

Dada Sai lived a full life as a householder. He was very meticulous in everything he did. He was always engrossed in activities of one kind or another—medical practice, reading and writing books, housekeeping, attending to family members and guests, extensive tours at home and abroad, visiting saints and places of pilgrimage, innovation and experimentation in herbal medicines, magnetic therapy, and gems therapy. He took personal interest in raising and care of birds and bushes. Every action was done with a keen sense of beauty, etiquette, orderliness and discipline, and yet devoid of any attachment. All his children received proper university education and were fixed in different vocations in life in India and outside India.

Dada Sai was specially interested in extensive tours. Since his childhood he had accompanied his father to various places of pilgrimage, shrines and

abodes of saints and holy persons. He was always fearless. He toured the jungles of the Himalayas alone on foot. One day while he was resting under a tree in a jungle in the Himalayas, a huge wild bear came up to him and was about to attack him. Dada Sai remained calm and unmoved. He just fixed his gaze in the eyes of the wild bear. The bear too kept gazing at him, at a distance of only a few feet. Dada Sai showed no signs of fear. After about 15 minutes when the bear got tired and Dada Sai made no movement of eyes, it turned its back and went away.

Once Dada Sai went unarmed into a habitation of aggressive tribals in the mountains in Baluchistan. At first, the tribals attacked him and were about to kill him. But Dada Sai attracted and befriended them so well that he was made to live as their guest for many a day.

Dada Sai was always cheerful, smiling and contented. There was a special attraction on his face. He was tall, fair and well-built. He always dressed as a simple ordinary man and did not put on a saintly garb, or dressed himself as a priest or a monk. His dwelling place was very simple and had no semblance of a shrine or a temple. He was a man of few words and spoke very little. He was a very good listener. When engaged informally in a discussion, he would become very lively and the whole room would echo with fun and laughter.

When anybody approached him with a personal problem, Dada Sai would engage him in fun and laughter and discuss matters so indirectly by quoting other examples, etc that the person would feel lighter and get necessary advice without Dada Sai making it explicit. Dada Sai would help others without allowing his ego to arise in any manner.

Dada Sai was a voracious reader. He had a very good collection of holy books of all religions including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Sufism, and also biographies of saints and fakirs etc. He was also familiar with various branches of knowledge. If someone talked to him on a topic on engineering, science, trade, commerce, music, art, etc he could discuss these with ease and great understanding.

Though he was familiar with various branches of knowledge, Dada Sai maintained a different faith. This he expressed in a letter to one of his children saying, "One has to forget everything and only remember God. Only remembrance is the worship. The mind must be directed to the Lord. All else is perishable and transitory. Only that which helps in attainment of the goal is useful. The cycle of the universe keeps moving. One has to seek liberation by one's endeavour or purushartha. Let the body be with the world, but mind

must be directed to the Lord.” His life was a practical demonstration of his faith. Living in the world, he was inwardly different from the world. Once one of his children complained to him that on account of excessive preoccupation with family obligations and official duties, he did not get time for the spiritual pursuits. In reply, Dada Sai said, “Neither office nor family are the obstacles on the spiritual path. Forgetfulness is the only obstacle.” He used to advise that a seeker must cooperate and be one with nature. Once a person left his home and put on ochre clothes. Dada Sai did not approve of it and advised that person to return home. The person obeyed Dada Sai and returned to his family.

Once a seeker approached Dada Sai and requested him for grace. With great love, Dada Sai replied in a sweet tone, “It is not at all necessary for a seeker to request a fakir for grace, because a fakir is a fountain of grace out of which grace spouts without a break. All that is needed is that the seeker becomes fit to receive grace and benefit by that. If the seeker is fit, the fakir will force his grace upon him, because that is the nature of the fakir. A seeker must have full faith in his *satguru* and be obedient to him.”

Dada Sai apparently led a quiet life. Nevertheless he felt greatly concerned with the conditions in the world and how the people were dragged away from spiritual pursuits. After the passing away of Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib, Dada Sai devoted himself largely to writing. He first collected from the disciples the notes of the dialogues of his father and Master, Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib, edited them and got them published in six volumes in Sindhi. Thereafter, he wrote and published in Sindhi a commentary on Shrimad Bhagwad Gita.

Dada Sai had special purpose in preparing the commentary on Shrimad Bhagwad Gita. He believed that Gita Gyan (Atmagyan) was the remedy to the problems of the man. He wanted to establish that there is no distinction between Vedanta and Sufism and said, “Truth is one and the same everywhere, at all times and in all religions, because Truth is that which has no changeableness. The apparent differences between various religions are because of semantic reasons.” While explaining the various *shlokas* in the Gita, he cited couplets of Sindhi Sufi saints with identical purport. The commentary is based on the personal experiences and realisations of Dada Sai. Because he had himself traversed the various paths, and attained the highest realisation, he was competent to guide others. He believed that Self-realisation is the true goal of human life and no efforts should be spared in this regard. It is a great folly and a misfortune to be oblivious of the true goal.

The methods for attaining the goal are given in the Gita and a sincere and earnest seeker endeavouring honestly under the guidance of a preceptor will attain the goal. It requires a constant devoted endeavour for spiritual progress. The goal is to attain the state of 'oneness'. It signifies absorption in Atma, Haq or Allah. He believed that unless a seeker goes beyond the realm of duality and attains to non-duality or oneness, his claims to Self-realisation or realisation of Atma or Haq are in vain.

Dada Sai prepared an English translation of his commentary on Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, the book which he completed in January 1980. In his 'Introduction' to this book, Dada Sai has explained what Sufism is and how it is identical with Vedanta. Relevant extracts from this 'Introduction' are reproduced at [Appendix II](#) to acquaint the readers of this book with the views of Dada Sai on Sufism and Vedanta.

Dada Sai also prepared in Sindhi a simplified and abridged version of Sri Yoga Vasishtha (the spiritual dialogue between Sri Ramchandra and Sri Vasishtha) in question and answer form. This was published by him 1972. In January 1980 he started work on translation of this book from Sindhi into English.¹ By this time his health received a severe set back.

¹ The work on translation of Sri Yoga Vasishtha from Sindhi into English was later taken up and completed by a devotee of Dada Sai. This was published by Sri H.M. Damodar in 1992.

Dada Sai developed heart trouble in February 1980. He had treatment for some time but that did not help. He left his mortal frame on 21 March, 1980. Thereafter, his eldest son, Sri H.M. Damodar was consecrated to the spiritual seat. The ceremony was performed by Syed Hazrat Noor Hussain Shah, *sajjadah-nashin*, Dargah Sahib Sai Qutab Ali Shah, Tando Jahanya, Hyderabad, Sind, Pakistan.

A simple *samadhi* of Dada Sai has been set up at the place where he lived, along with the *samadhi* of Sai (Dr) Rochaldas Sahib at Darbar of Sai Rochaldas Sahib, 1194, Shanti Nagar, Ulhas Nagar-3, Dist. Thane (Near Bombay), Maharashtra State.

Appendix II

ON VEDANTA AND SUFISM

Extracts from 'INTRODUCTION' to Shrimad Bhagwad Gita¹ (*Ilim Ludani-va-Tohid*) by Dr R.M. Hari

¹ published by H.M. Damodar

The approach adopted in this book is unique—to show that the Truth (Atma, Haq) is one and the same everywhere, at all times and in all religions, because Truth is that which has no changeableness. Special reference has been made to Sufism to show that there is no difference between Vedanta and Sufism or other religions and the apparent differences among them are because of semantic reasons.

The blessed personalities of all religions who have dived deep into the spiritual realm (*Atma Gyan—Ilim Ludani*) have expressed and established the truth of oneness (non-duality). The ignorant fanatics tied down in the shackles of wordiness of religion have been criticising other religions without understanding the real meaning of the Truth which is identical in every religion. One sage has said, “He who sticks to words only, shall not rise to the climax.” Fanaticism has really deprived us of Atmananda—the Bliss—and has plunged us into materialism instead of spiritual bliss and thus put us in consternation.

Before proceeding, it is very essential to give the true meaning of the word Sufi. Sufi is he who enjoys the eternal bliss of oneness (non-duality). The word Sufi is not a monopoly of any particular caste or creed. It is of Arabic origin and can be attributed to anybody having the qualities of a Sufi. The word Sufi has been derived from the Arabic word *Suf*, meaning wool. During olden times, the seekers of the Truth used to put on woolen clothes because such people did not believe in physical comforts; wool pricked their bodies and kept them conscious of devotion and love for the Truth. So the persons who wore woolen clothes were considered Sufis, the men of austerity. The word Sufi is also idiomatically used by many sages, meaning that the person is in constant communion with God. The word *Suf* also means liberation and, therefore, Sufi is he who has renounced all worldly pleasures for the sake of his liberation. Sufi also means pure. He who lives pure, eats pure, and is pure

in thought and deed is a real Sufi, whatever be his caste or creed.

A great Sufi has very clearly depicted the qualities of a Sufi and not the religion, as given below:

THE QUALITIES AND LIVING OF A SUFI

Sufi is he who knows the Truth,
Loses his ego and merges in guru,
Knows not religions, sees one in all,
Kindles the fire of love and burns his ego,
Transforms with word and thought,
In *turiya (lahoot)* finds his abode.
Neither hurts nor is hurt,
Finds the self in everyone,
Transforms ego into Self,
Forgetting manifestations,
Outer inner lives so pure,
Pains and pleasures feels the same,
Finds self in the Self,
Speaks of unseen,
Always remains in devotion,
Abandoning ego becomes unattached,
In everyone sees one God,
Friend and foe treats as one,
Life he leads a pure one,
Happy unhappy he never is,
Dalpat¹ the real Sufi he is.

¹ name of the poet

All the perfect Masters have mentioned the following four stages for the seekers of Truth:

1. *Dharma* = religion = *Shariat*

All the castes and creeds have given the same principles for the seekers of the Truth. So long as the seeker possesses ego he is bound within the rules and regulations and customs of his religion.

2. *Karma* = Action = *Tariqat*

Karma means action i.e. *tariqat*, the modus operandi following which one loses ego (the small self), and the mind (*hirdaya*, *qalab*) is purified.

3. *Bhakti* = Devotion = *Haqikat*

Purified mind can understand Atma and *anatma* i.e. Truth and untruth (*Haq* and *batul*). This stage is known as *bhakti*—the real devotion (*haqikat*).

4. *Gyan* = Perfect knowledge of Atma (*Marfat*)

When ego, the little self, is dissolved in the Absolute, peace of mind is attained and perfect knowledge of the Truth is obtained. At this stage the gyani (wise, *arif*) transcends the bonds of this material (gross, *sifati*) world and he is known as *Atma Sakshatkari* (*Vasil Baqa*), a man of Self-realization and knower of the Truth. The four stages of Yoga are further explained as follows:

THE FOUR STAGES (*MANZILS*) OF YOGA

(The manner of living and understanding at each stage)

1. Dharma (Religion—*Shariat*)

Dharma teaches the conduct of life and the right way of thinking. At this stage, the aspirant has to remain as a *brahmchari* (the seeker, *talib-e-Haq*). The seeker is considered to be under the influence of buddhi (intelligence—*aqal*). He is bound within the trio of life i.e. *gyata-gyan-gyeya*, knower-knowledge-known (*Ilim Salaas*).

2. Karma (Actions, *Tariqat*)

Karma teaches the way of developing concentration and love for God. The seeker is considered to be under the influence of mind (*nafs*). At this stage, the aspirant sometimes experiences disappointments and fears (*beem va raja*). The preceptor teaches him how to pass that stage.

3. Bhakti (Devotion, *Haqikat*)

At the third stage the seeker acquires the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation in action and becomes a sanyasi, *tarak*; he is known as *amil*. At this stage he is guided by his intuition.

4. Gyan (The knowledge of perfect Truth, *Marfat*).

At the fourth stage the aspirant becomes a yogi (*vasil baqa*, *tasleem masawat*). Here the more the aspirant dives deep within, the more he enjoys the bliss. He becomes the master of all creation. All the experiences are his personal.

GLOSSARY

<i>Abhyas</i> (अभ्यास)	: practice; discipline
<i>Adi neeti</i> (आदि नीति)	: the primeval order or code
<i>Adi sankalpa</i> (आदि संकल्प)	: the primeval ideation in consciousness
<i>Agyan</i> (अज्ञान)	: ignorance, individual or cosmic which is responsible for non-perception of the reality
<i>Ahamkar</i> (अहंकार)	: ego
<i>Aqal</i> (अक्ल)	: intelligence
<i>Akarmi</i> (अकर्मी)	: not attached to actions; a person engaged in action without desiring the fruits of the action
<i>Akash</i> (आकाश)	: space; ether; void; the first of the five elements evolved from Brahm or the Absolute. It is the most subtle form of matter into which all elements are ultimately resolved
<i>Akhand langer</i> (अखंड लंगर)	: serving food uninterruptedly
<i>Akhand jyoti</i> (अखंड ज्योति)	: uninterrupted light or flame
<i>Akhand Path Sahib</i> (अखंड पाठ साहिब)	: uninterrupted reading of Guru Granth Sahib
<i>Akhand Vani</i> (अखंड वाणी)	: uninterrupted recitation
<i>Allah</i> (अल्लाह)	: God (impersonal); the Absolute; Brahm
<i>Alvida</i> (अलविदा)	: farewell
<i>Amrita</i> (अमृत)	: nectar; immortality
<i>Ana-al-Haq</i> (अन-अल्-हक)	: I am God
<i>Anahat shabd</i> (अनाहत शब्द)	: the primordial sound; another name of Om

<i>Ananda</i> (आनंद)	: bliss
<i>Anatma</i> (अनात्मा)	: unreal; non-existent; opposite of Atma
<i>Antahkaran</i> (अंतः करण)	: the internal agencies, viz mind, intelligence, chitta and ego
<i>Anubhava</i> (अनुभव)	: experience
<i>Arati</i> (आरती)	: worship of a deity accompanied by the waving of lights
<i>Arpan</i> (अर्पण)	: surrender
<i>Artha</i> (अर्थ)	: purpose; objective
<i>Asat</i> (असत्)	: opposite of <i>sat</i> ; unreal
<i>Ashiq</i> (आशिक)	: lover
<i>Ashram</i> (आश्रम)	: hermitage
<i>Atma</i> (आत्मा)	: God Infinite; Truth; Allah; Haq
<i>Atma abhyas</i> (आत्माभ्यास)	: spiritual discipline; spiritual endeavour; spiritual practice
<i>Atma gyan</i> (आत्मज्ञान)	: direct knowledge of Atma; Self-realisation
<i>Atmananda</i> (आत्मानंद)	: bliss; <i>rehmat Illahi</i>
<i>Atmaswaroop</i> (आत्मस्वरूप)	: the Self
<i>Atma tattva</i> (आत्मतत्त्व)	: the substratum, the noumenon or the unmodified consciousness that is the primeval element of existence
<i>Avidya</i> (अविद्या)	: ignorance, individual or cosmic, which is responsible for non-perception of the Reality; mundane knowledge
<i>Auliya</i> (औलिया)	: sage
<i>Ayurveda</i> (आयुर्वेद)	: Indian system of therapy using herbal medicines
<i>Badrinath</i> (बदरीनाथ)	: a pilgrim place at a high altitude in the Himalayas

<i>Banda</i> (बन्दा)	: a humble person; a human being
<i>Baqa-ba-Allah</i> (बका-ब-अल्लाह)	: the highest stage of spiritual attainment
	: where there is total annihilation of the self or ego; the stage of <i>turiya-atit</i>
<i>Baz</i> (बाज़)	: falcon
<i>Bekhudi</i> (बेखुदी)	: the egoless state
<i>Bepervah</i> (बेपरवाह)	: indifferent; unattached; not dependent
<i>Bhakt Dhruva</i> (भक्त ध्रुव)	: the name of a sage in Indian mythology
	: who attained realisation through severe penance in his early childhood
<i>Bhakti</i> (भक्ति)	: devotion; divine love; spiritual fervour
<i>Bhakti Marg</i> (भक्ति मार्ग)	: path of devotion and divine love
<i>Bhartrihari</i> (भर्तृहरि)	: the famous ruler of Ujjain who abdicated and became a yogi
<i>Bhoga</i> (भोग)	: enjoyment; indulgence (sensual)
<i>Bibi Rabiya</i>	: a high-ranking woman Sufi saint of the Middle East in the medieval period
<i>Basra</i> (बीबी रबिया बसरा)	
<i>Brahm</i> (ब्रह्म)	: the Absolute; the non-dual Supreme Reality; God (impersonal); Allah; Atma
<i>Brahm agni</i> (ब्रह्म अग्नि)	: the Primordial Force or Power
<i>Brahm gyani</i> (ब्रह्म ज्ञानी)	: one who has direct realisation of Brahm
<i>Brahm swaroop</i> (ब्रह्म स्वरूप)	: of the nature of Brahm
<i>Buddhi</i> (बुद्धि)	: intelligence
<i>Chakra</i> (चक्र)	: plexus; the centre of spiritual energy in the human body; any one of the six centres or lotuses in <i>sushumna</i> through which the <i>Kundalini</i> rises
<i>Chinmatra Chetan</i>	: Pure Consciousness or Absolute Existence
<i>Satta</i> (चिन्मात्र चेतन सत्ता)	: free from modifications or ideations

<i>Chitta</i> (चित्त)	: individual consciousness
<i>Dakshina</i> (दक्षिणा)	: oblation made to a guru or to brahmins
<i>Dan</i> (दान)	: alms; gift
<i>Dargah</i> (दरगाह)	: a shrine built on the grave of a Sufi saint
<i>Dard</i> (दर्द)	: anguish; pain
<i>Darshan</i> (दर्शन)	: glimpse; vision; appearance
<i>Dastarband</i> (दस्तार बन्द)	: a ceremony performed to consecrate a saint by tying to him a turban (of ochre cloth). It is a solemn occasion when the saint bestows grace upon his disciples.
<i>Dava</i> (दवा)	: medicine
<i>Desh</i> (देश)	: country; place
<i>Devta</i> (देवता)	: a god; a deity
<i>Dhamal</i> (धमाल)	: a tune played mainly on drums to practise concentration and breath control. It is generally played at some Sufi shrines
<i>Dharma</i> (धर्म)	: duty; religion; righteous way of living
<i>Dharmshala</i> (धर्मशाला)	: a charitable rest-house
<i>Dhoti</i> (धोती)	: a length of cloth worn round the waist, passing between the legs and fastened on the back
<i>Dua</i> (दुआ)	: benediction; blessing; prayer
<i>Duree</i> (दरी)	: A simple cotton mat
<i>Fakir</i> (फकीर)	: saint, dervish
<i>Fakiri</i> (फकीरी)	: the path of saintliness
<i>Fana-fi-Allah</i> (फना फी अल्लाह)	: the stage of self-annihilation where the seeker attains absorption in God
<i>Fana-fi-al-</i>	: the stage of self-annihilation where the seeker attains absorption in the Prophet, or

<i>Rasool</i> (फ़ना फ़ी अल रसूल)	: a deity, or an incarnation
<i>Fana-fi-al-Sheikh</i> (फ़ना फ़ी अल शेख)	the stage of self-annihilation where the seeker attains absorption in his murshid or preceptor (satguru)
<i>Fanai</i> (फ़नाई)	annihilation of the self; absorption resulting in oblivion of the body and of the self
<i>Gaddi</i> (गद्दी)	: a spiritual seat
<i>Ghaus Vajudi</i> (ग़ौस वजूदी)	: a high ranking sage who has realised the Truth
<i>Gopi(s)</i> (गोपी)	the milkmaids of Brindaban (Vrindavan) who were the companions of Lord Krishna. : The word 'Gopi' also signifies a lover of God (personal), in a feminine form or with a feminine disposition of mind
<i>Goshe nashini</i> (गोशे नशीनी)	practice of living in silence and seclusion : avoiding interaction with the people; : remaining aloof so as to be engaged in undisturbed meditation
<i>Guna</i> (गुण)	: an attribute; quality
<i>Guru</i> (गुरु)	: preceptor; murshid; spiritual teacher
<i>Gurdeva</i> (also <i>Gurudeva</i>) (गुरुदेव)	: respectful way of addressing the guru; a guru identified with a god or a deity
<i>Gurmukh</i> (also <i>Gurumukh</i>) (गुरमुख)	: directed Godward, obedient to the guru
<i>Gurshabd</i> (also <i>Gurushabd</i>) (गुरुशब्द)	: the sacred word received from the guru at the time of initiation
<i>Gurvani</i> (also <i>Guruvani</i>) (गुरवाणी या गुरुवाणी)	: the hymns of the (Sikh) Gurus
<i>Gyan</i> (ज्ञान)	knowledge; true knowledge; direct : knowledge of Atma; the highest realisation; Self-realisation

<i>Gyani</i> (ज्ञानी)	: one who has realised the Self or the Truth
<i>Gyan Marg</i> (ज्ञान मार्ग)	: the path of spiritual knowledge; God-realisation or Self-realisation through knowledge or intellect
<i>Gyan Yoga</i> (ज्ञान योग)	: realising God, or the Self, or Atma, or Allah through intellect
<i>Hakeem</i> (हकीम)	: a physician who practises the Unani system of medicine
<i>Hamsa</i> (हंस)	: a kind of swan found in the lakes at very high altitudes in the Himalayas; the inner self
<i>Haq</i> (हक़)	: the Truth; the Absolute; Brahm
<i>Haqiqi</i> (हक़ीक़ी)	: pertaining to Haq
<i>Hari Om</i> (हरि ओम)	: divine words used for greeting a person or persons
<i>Hatha Yoga</i> (हठ योग)	: a school of yoga that lays stress on physical processes, chiefly the breath control
<i>Hatha Yogi</i> (हठ योगी)	: one who practises hatha yoga
<i>Havan</i> (हवन)	: a mode of worship among the Hindus in which oblations to gods are made in fire
<i>Havan-kund</i> (हवन कुण्ड)	: the fire-pot used in havan
<i>Hazrat Ali</i> (हज़रत अली)	: the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed. He had a very high spiritual status. He was the fourth Caliph. The Shias venerate him as next to the Prophet
<i>Husn</i> (हुस्न)	: beauty
<i>Ishq</i> (इश्क़)	: love
<i>Ishq Haqiqi</i> (इश्क़ हक़ीक़ी)	: love for God, Allah, the Truth, the Non-dual, or the Absolute
<i>Ishq Ilahi</i> (इश्क़ इलाही)	: love for God or Allah; divine love
	: love or attraction for a form or an attribute

Ishq majazi (इश्क़ मजाजी)

Ishwara (ईश्वर)

: God (personal)

Ishwara-roop (ईश्वर रूप)

: of the nature of God

Jagran (जागरण)

: keeping awake

Jagrat (जागृत)

: waking

Janaka (जनक)

literally a king. It refers in particular to the king of Mithila who had attained gyan, i.e. realised the Self, and yet functioned as a king. His daughter Sita was the consort of Lord Rama

Janmashtami (जन्माष्टमी)

: the birthday of Lord Krishna

Japa (जप)

repeated utterance or recitation of a holy word(s) or a mantra according to certain rules

Japa ji/Japa

the scripture written by Guru Nanak. It forms the opening section of Guru Granth Sahib

Sahib (जप जी/जप साहिब)

Jiva (जीव)

: a finite being; a living being; embodied soul

Jivanmukta (जीवन मुक्त)

: one liberated from maya or the cosmic illusion while living in a body

Juz aqal (जुज़ अक्ल)

: finite intelligence; limited knowledge

Jyoti (ज्योति)

: light

Kafir (काफिर)

: an infidel

Kal (काल)

: time

Kalgi (कलगी)

: a feather or a tuft on the head

Kaliyuga (कलियुग)

the last of the four yugas or cycles. In kaliyuga there is a minimum of virtue and the maximum of vice. The world is said to be presently passing through kaliyuga. a place of pilgrimage in Iraq. The Battle of Karbala was fought here. Hussain, the

<i>Karbala-i-Mualla</i> (करबला इ मौला)	: grandson of the Prophet, was killed in this battle
<i>Karma</i> (कर्म)	: action
<i>Karma Marg</i> (कर्म मार्ग)	: the discipline or path of actions; the path by which an aspirant seeks to realise God through work
<i>Katha</i> (कथा)	: recitation or narration from an epic or a scripture before a gathering of important characters in the epic Mahabharata. They were one hundred sons of Dhritrashtra who usurped the share of Pandavas in the kingdom and were later engaged in the battle of Mahabharata
<i>Kauravas</i> (कौरव)	: a place of pilgrimage in the Himalayas
<i>Kedarnath</i> (केदार नाथ)	: the creation of God
<i>Khudai</i> (खुदाई)	: ego
<i>Khudi</i> (खुदी)	: grace
<i>Kripa</i> (कृपा)	: activity
<i>Kriya</i> (क्रिया)	: all knowing; infinite intelligence
<i>Kul-aqal</i> (कुल अक्ल)	: the Serpent Power; the vital force or the primordial cosmic energy that lies dormant, coiled like a serpent, at the base of the spine in all individuals
<i>Kundalini</i> (कुंडलिनी)	: the part of Brindaban (Vrindavan) where Lord Krishna played with his friends in his early years
<i>Kunj Gali</i> (कुंज गली)	: not dependent on anybody
<i>La-muhtaj</i> (ला मुहताज)	: one hundred thousand
<i>Lakh</i> (लाख)	: plane
<i>Lok</i> (लोक)	: bliss, ananda

Lutf (लुत्फ)

Madhuvan (मधुवन)

Majnu (मजनू)

Malamat (मलामत)

Manomukh (मनोमुख)

Mansarovar (मानसरोवर)

Marg (मार्ग)

Mast (मस्त)

Mast Qalandar (मस्त कलंदर)

Maya (माया)

Mendi (मेन्दी)

Majazi (मजाज़ी)

Mir (मीर)

Moksha (मोक्ष)

Mohammed (मुहम्मद)

Mrityu lok (मृत्यु लोक)

Muhtaj (मुहताज)

Mansoor (मन्सूर)

Murshid (मुर्शिद)

Naaz (नाज़)

name of the forest in Brindaban

: (Vrindavan) where Lord Krishna used to graze cattle and sport with his mates

a lover of the highest order; the famous character in the Laila Majnu episode of the Middle East

: ill-fame; *ninda*

: one guided by his desires or impulses

the famous lake at a very high altitude in the Himalayas

: path

jalali; an ecstatic seeker who bursts out on a slight provocation or distraction from divinity

: invocation for Qalandar Ial Shahbaz

the cosmic illusion; ignorance obscuring the vision of God; the divine sport

the floral sheet that is ceremonially laid on the grave or samadhi of a saint

: pertaining to a form of an attribute

: a member of Muslim royal family in Sind

: liberation

: the Prophet

: the mortal plane

: dependent

the Sufi saint who was executed because he openly proclaimed Ana-al-Haq (I am God)

: preceptor; spiritual teacher; satguru

: whims and fancies

<i>Nam</i> (नाम)	: the divine element
<i>Namaz</i> (नमाज़)	: the prayer offered by Muslims
<i>Naqqara</i> (नक्कारा)	: kettle drum
<i>Neeti</i> (नीति)	: code of conduct; discipline
<i>Night-Keeping</i>	. to keep awake and be engaged in · meditation the whole night
<i>Ninda</i> (निन्दा)	: ill-fame; <i>malamat</i>
<i>Nirbhav</i> (निर्भव)	: fearless
<i>Nirguna</i> (निर्गुण)	: without attributes and forms; the Absolute
<i>Nirguni</i> (निर्गुणी)	. not associated with a form or an attribute; · pertaining to nirguna
<i>Nirvikalpa</i>	the highest state of samadhi in which the
<i>samadhi</i> (निर्विकल्प समाधि)	: seeker realises total identity with Allah, God or Brahm
<i>Nirvair</i> (निर्वैर)	: free from animosity
<i>Niyam</i> (नियम)	: rule; regulation
<i>Noor-i-Ilahi</i> (नूर-ए-इलाही)	: divine light
<i>Niyaz</i> (नियाज़)	: humility
<i>Nuzul</i> (नुज़ूल)	: coming down; bringing the breath down
<i>Paap bhoomi</i> (पाप भूमि)	: land or place associated with vice
<i>Paramananda</i> (परमानंद)	: the highest bliss
<i>Paramatma</i> (परमात्मा)	: the Supreme Being; the Supreme Soul
<i>Parampad</i> (परमपद)	: the supreme state
<i>Path</i> (पाठ)	: recitation or reading, specially of a scripture
<i>Pathi</i> (पाठी)	: a person engaged for reading a scripture
<i>Patti</i> (पत्ति)	. title of the spiritual acrostic included in · Guru Granth Sahib
<i>Phurna</i> (फुरना)	: ideation; modification in chitta

<i>Pooja</i> (पूजा)	: worship
<i>Pranayama</i> (प्राणायाम)	: prana yoga; yoga of regulating the breath
<i>Prarabdha</i> (प्रारब्ध)	: destiny
<i>Prasad</i> (प्रसाद)	: food or drink that is offered to a deity and is then distributed among the devotees
<i>Prem</i> (प्रेम)	: love; <i>ishq</i> ; ecstatic love; intense divine love
<i>Prema bhakti</i> (प्रेमा भक्ति)	: the path of love or devotion for God; ecstatic love for God
<i>Punya bhoomi</i> (पुण्य भूमि)	: land or place which is associated with virtue or which stimulates virtue; a holy place
<i>Purusha</i> (पुरुष)	: the Supreme Being
<i>Purushartha</i> (पुरुषार्थ)	: endeavour to realise the Supreme Being, God or Allah
<i>Qazi</i> (काज़ी)	: a judge
<i>Qalandar</i> (कलंदर)	: a sage of a very high order (among the Sufis)
<i>Quran Shareef</i> (कुरान शरीफ)	: the holy book of Islam
<i>Radha</i> (राधा)	: Sri Krishna's most devoted companion among the gopis of Brindaban (Vrindavan)
<i>Raksha</i> (रक्षा)	: a talisman; an amulet
<i>Raj</i> (रज)	: dust
<i>Rajas</i> (राजस)	: the medium quality in nature which creates desires and leads to the bondage of action; the attribute of dynamism in nature
<i>Ramayana</i> (रामायण)	: the epic of Lord Rama
<i>Raqs</i> (रक्स)	: dance; a rhythmic movement
<i>Ras Leela</i> (रास लीला)	: a group dance associated with Lord Krishna and his mates
	: prophet

Rasool (रसूल)

Ravana (रावण)

Rishi (ऋषि)

Sada Shiv (सदा शिव)

Sadhana (साधना)

Sadhu (साधु)

Saguna (सगुण)

Saguna prem (सगुण प्रेम)

Sahaj awastha (सहज अवस्था)

Sajjadah

Nashin (सज्जादा नशीन)

Samadhi (समाधि)

Samadhi (समाधि)

Sammelan (सम्मेलन)

Sankalpa (संकल्प)

Sangat (संगत)

Sansara (संसार)

Sanskara (संस्कार)

Sanyasi (सन्यासी)

Sat (सत)

Sat-Chit-

Ananda (सत्-चित्-आनन्द)

: the demon king of Lanka who is one of the most important characters in the Ramayana

: a seer of the Truth

: Lord Shiva

: spiritual practice

: a holy man; a monk; a hermit

: endowed with attributes

: devotion to God with a form and attributes

: the natural state

: the occupant of a spiritual seat whom devotees offer their devotion and oblations

: ultimate consummation; ecstasy; trance; absorption in God; communion with God; complete merger of the mind in God-consciousness

: a shrine; a structure built at the place of cremation of a person or at the place where his ashes are preserved

: congregation

: ideation; modification in chitta or consciousness; idea; resolve; volition

: association; religious or spiritual fellowship

: the manifest universe

: tendencies inherited from the previous birth

: a recluse

: Truth, Existence Absolute

: Existence-Knowledge-Bliss; Absolute

<i>Satguru</i> (सतगुरु)	: a true teacher; a spiritual teacher; a preceptor; a <i>murshid</i>
<i>Satsang</i> (सत्संग)	: holy association; association with the Truth; : association with the evolved souls
<i>Satshastra</i> (सत्शास्त्र)	: holy scriptures dealing with the Truth, : Allah or God
<i>Sattva</i> (सत्त्व)	: the high class in nature or the pure quality : which leads to knowledge and tranquility : communion with God in which the
<i>Savikalpa</i> (सविकल्प)	: distinction between the subject and the : object is retained
<i>Seva</i> (सेवा)	: service
<i>Shabd</i> (शब्द)	: the holy word received from the preceptor : at the time of initiation
<i>Shanti swaroop</i> (शान्ति स्वरूप)	: in the state of equanimity
<i>Shariat</i> (शरियत)	: the Islamic Law
<i>Shehnai</i> (शहनाई)	: a musical instrument
<i>Shia</i> (शीअः)	: A Muslim sect
<i>Shiva</i> (शिव)	: one of the Hindu trinity; the annihilator of : the world
<i>Shiva Puran</i> (शिव पुराण)	: the epic of Lord Shiva
<i>Shravana</i> (श्रवण)	: to listen; the act of listening
<i>Shrimad Bhagwad</i> <i>Gita</i> (श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता)	: the well-known Hindu scripture containing : the teachings of Lord Krishna to his : disciple Arjuna
<i>Smaran</i> (स्मरण)	: remembering
<i>Soz</i> (सोज़)	: pathos
<i>Srimad</i> <i>Bhagwat</i> (श्रीमद् भागवत)	: a sacred book of the Hindus dealing with : the lives of the different incarnations of : Lord Vishnu, elaborately of Lord Krishna.

<i>Sri Yoga Vasishtha</i> (श्री योग वाशिष्ठ)	: a sacred book of the Hindus dealing with the spiritual dialogue between Lord Rama and his preceptor Sri Vasishtha
<i>Sukhmani</i> (सुखमनी)	: a set of sacred hymns composed by Guru Arjun Dev, the fourth Guru in the lineage of Guru Nanak
<i>Sukhun</i> (सुखुन)	: the holy word or the gurshabd received by a disciple from his preceptor murshid at the time of initiation
<i>Sunni</i> (सुन्नी)	: a Muslim sect
<i>Surt Sadhana</i> (सुर्त साधना)	: a kind of yogic practice
<i>Sushumna</i> (सुषुम्ना)	: One of the three prominent <i>nadis</i> or nerves in the nervous system. It is situated within the spinal column and extends from the base of the spine to the crown of head. On awakening, the spiritual energy (<i>kundalini</i>) rises through sushumna
<i>Sushupti</i> (सुषुप्ति)	: the state of deep sleep
<i>Swapna</i> (स्वप्न)	: dream state
<i>Swayamvar</i> (स्वयंवर)	: the public choice of a husband by a princess or a girl from amongst a number of suitors assembled for the purpose
<i>Syed</i> (सय्यद)	: a descendant of the Prophet
<i>Tamas</i> (तमस)	: the low quality in nature which creates sluggishness and ignorance; slothful state
<i>Tapa</i> (तप)	: penance; spiritual austerities
<i>Tariqat</i> (तरीकत)	: discipline; methodology; system
<i>Tattva</i> (तत्त्व)	: cosmic principle or element
<i>Tawakkul</i>	
<i>Khuda</i> (तवक्कुल खुदा)	: exclusive dependence on God
<i>Teerth dhara</i> (तीर्थ धारा)	: water from holy rivers

<i>Tejaswi</i> (तेजस्वी)	: lordly; lustrous; effulgent; glorious; magnificent
<i>Triguni Maya</i> (त्रिगुणी माया)	: the cosmic illusion comprising the three attributes of <i>sattva</i> , <i>rajas</i> and <i>tamas</i>
<i>Trikuti</i> (त्रिकुटी)	: the spot between the two eyebrows
<i>Trikuti Dhyān</i> (त्रिकुटी ध्यान)	: practice involving concentration on <i>trikuti</i>
<i>Trishna</i> (तृष्णा)	: desire
<i>Tukhm</i> (तुख्म)	: ancestral qualities
<i>Turiya</i> (तुरीय)	: the fourth state of consciousness that transcends and pervades the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep; the state where the individual self is united with the Universal Self
<i>Turiya-atit</i> (तुरीयातीत)	: the state transcending the <i>turiya</i> state
<i>Tyag</i> (त्याग)	: renunciation
<i>Urooj</i> (उरूज)	: going up, raising the breath
<i>Vairagya</i> (वैराग्य)	: non-attachment; dispassion
<i>Vani</i> (वाणी)	: sound; recitation
<i>Varsi</i> (वरसी)	: anniversary
<i>Vasana</i> (वासना)	: subtle desire; latent tendency; idea
<i>Vasishtha</i> (वसिष्ठ)	: Sri Vasishtha was the preceptor of Lord Rama
<i>Vichar</i> (विचार)	: contemplation; thinking
<i>Videhamukta</i> (विदेह मुक्त)	: one who is liberated and is without body feelings
<i>Vidya</i> (विद्या)	: knowledge
<i>Vikar</i> (विकार)	: fault; blemish
<i>Vikram Samvat</i> (विक्रम सम्वत्)	: era started by King Vikramaditya in India
	: discrimination

Vivek (विवेक)

Vrit (व्रत) : austerity

Vritti (वृत्ति) : disposition; thought wave

Wahid (वाहिद) : non-dual

Wall Allah (वली अल्लाह) : one who is in (mystical) union with God

Yoga (योग) . unity with the Infinite; discipline; path
· leading to unity with the Infinite

Yogi (योगी) . one who practices yoga; one who has
· realised the Self

Yajna (यज्ञ) : a sacrificial rite

Zahid (ज़ाहिद) . a seeker or a saint who is leading a normal
· life unlike an ecstatic seeker or a saint

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